

**Personal adventures in Upper and Lower California,  
in 1848-9; with the author's experience at the mines.  
Illustrated by twenty-three drawings ...By William  
Redmond Ryan ...**

THE PRINCIPAL STREET OF SAN FRANCISCO. W. Shoberl, Publisher, 20. Gt. Marlborough  
Street, 1850.

PERSONAL ADVENTURES

IN

UPPER

AND

LOWER CALIFORNIA,

IN 1848-9;

WITH THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE AT THE MINES.

ILLUSTRATED BY TWENTY-THREE DRAWINGS, TAKEN ON

THE SPOT.

BY

WILLIAM REDMOND RYAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

WILLIAM SHOBERL, PUBLISHER,

20, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1850.

F. Shoberl, Jun., Printer to H.R.H. Prince Albert, Rupert Street.

## **PREFACE.**

The following sketches were not originally intended to meet the public eye, having been hastily thrown off for the amusement of the writer's family in England; and now, if in yielding to the earnest and repeated solicitations of perhaps over-zealous and too partial friends, he should subject himself to the charge of temerity, by giving them a more extended circulation, he trusts that some indulgence will be shown him, on the ground that the scenes he describes have excited more than a passing interest in the public mind, and that little has as yet been published that is calculated to satisfy it. If time had admitted of it, the Author would have preferred giving the narrative some other form iv than that of Personal Adventures, and sinking his own individuality in some more general mode of treating the subject; but again he must ask the reader to bear in mind that the more convenient framework that originally suggested itself was that in which it now appears; and that, when his permission was asked to publish the manuscript, he was at too great a distance to alter its construction.

In explanation of the motives that induced the writer to venture upon so distant an expedition—for they were somewhat different from those that influence the feverish speculations of the present day—it will be sufficient to state that he was one of those restless spirits, who, during the late

war between the United States and Mexico, sought relief from the monotony of civilized life, in a more congenial and adventurous existence amidst the wilds and mountains of California. That country had just begun to attract the eager regards of the American democrats, who, appreciating its happy v geographical position, and the advantages to be derived from its fine harbours, could not fail to see in this acquisition another gigantic stride towards the fulfilment of their boasted destiny. The favourable accounts, too, which had been recently received, from some few writers and travellers, of its capabilities for agricultural as well as for commercial purposes, tended in no small degree to inflame the general desire to add this “bright particular star” to the national constellation. The author must confess to his not having been altogether uninfluenced by the latter feeling, so thoroughly does a lengthened residence in the States imbue a foreigner with the prevailing spirit of the people; while his tastes as an artist were no less excited by the glowing descriptions that had been received of the sunny skies and genial atmosphere of this new-born Italy. He longed for the warmth and brightness of a tropical climate, and hoped that, even a few degrees further north, on the Pacific side, he might experience an improvement vi in the general state of his health and spirits, which had been greatly impaired by the sedentary and unwholesome nature of the pursuits in which he had been engaged.

March 25, 1850.

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## PERSONAL ADVENTURES

IN

UPPER AND LOWER CALIFORNIA.

### CHAPTER I.

Departure for Fort Hamilton—Initiation into the hardships of a military career—“There is a bright side to every thing”—Sketches from Life—An odd compound of opposite qualities—A Swedish kit—Eugene O'reily—A German Esculapius and a Yankee quack—An awkward subject for the drill-sergeant—Foray in the farmyards—Our Captain's exordium and peroration—Peculiarities of the Volunteer service.

There is no career, however humble, which drags its slow length along unmarked by some eventful epoch, whether of joy or grief—some passage in the monotonous routine of an obscure existence, which serves to indicate the long, dull stages of our journey to the 2 grave—some decisive moment, in short, when the mind, abandoning itself to extremes, rashly compromises the future in the exaggerations of a heated imagination, and embraces at a grasp its chances of good or evil.

Such was the day on which I joined the band of hardy adventurers who had resolved to stake their lives on the conquest and settlement of a region so distant, that even to reach it involved no ordinary amount of peril. I had wound up all my affairs in New York the previous evening, and severed, as I then thought for ever, the many ties that bound me to a place in which I had passed some of the happiest, though, at the same time, some of the most anxious moments of my life. There were few amongst us who cared much as to the chances of our revisiting the scenes we were then quitting; for we were, for the most part, thoroughly sick of the life of large cities, and exaggerated

to ourselves the delights of a pastoral existence in a new settlement, in which both climate and soil were supposed to render the allotted duties of man more of a pastime <sup>3</sup> than a toil. So wisely ordained is it that the imagination should exert a powerful influence over our actions; for were we to be swayed solely by the dictates of what is called common sense, those who are tempted to constitute themselves the pioneers of civilization would never have resolution enough to face the dangers of the forest or wilderness.

I arrived at Fort Hamilton in the beginning of June, 1847, and found assembled there nearly the full complement of persons deemed necessary for the expedition. They were, for the most part, composed of intelligent and, in some instances, well-educated young men, dashed, as in all such enterprises, with a sprinkling of the wild and reckless spirits to be found in all the Atlantic cities. This diversity of habits and character was to be expected, from the nature of the service on which we had volunteered; the military portion of it, as in the case of the old Roman colonists, being regarded merely as a period <sup>4</sup> of probation to qualify us for the enjoyment of our future conquests.

Although fully prepared “to rough it,” even in the American sense of the term, our initiation into the hardships of a military career, during a sojourn of several months at the fort, realized, at the outset, our worst anticipations, and there were few amongst us who would not have gladly exchanged for active service in the field the confinement and discomfort that we endured here previous to our embarkation. Between severe and constant drilling, and the most culpable irregularity in the supply of provisions, we had a tolerable foretaste of what we should have to encounter when we came to deal with the sterner realities of a soldier's life. And yet, strange to say, although the previous habits and education of many amongst this motley assemblage of adventurers of different nations but ill adapted them for the privations and dull uniformity of this sort of life, and still less for the close companionship of the uncongenial spirits with whom they were compelled <sup>5</sup> to associate, there was comparatively but little repining, a general determination seeming to have been arrived at to look at everything under its brightest aspect, and to accept the incidents of our position, distasteful though they might be, in the true spirit of stoicism.

And, after all, there *is* a sunny side to every phase of this much-abused existence of ours. Our life at the fort, although miserable enough, Heaven knows, was not altogether devoid of amusement and instruction to those who are fond of the study of character. As, in the course of the following narrative, I may have occasion to introduce some of my companions to the notice of my readers, some previous acquaintance with their peculiarities may serve to give greater zest to the little episodes in which they play a part.

The butt of the detachment, and general target for the witlings, was a young Swede named Wettermark, who presented in his person a curious compound of the most opposite qualities. Brave as a lion, yet querulous under privations; deeply read, yet simple as a child; 6 full of genius, yet incapable of turning his abilities to any practical account, he was a notable example of that anomalous mental organization not unfrequently to be met with, in which an extraordinary capacity for absorbing information is conjoined with a lamentable sterility and unfruitfulness—the rich seed sown producing but tares.

Not less curious than the strange jumble of miscellaneous acquirements laid up to rust in the mental storehouse of this eccentric being, were the contents of his compendious kit, the proportions of which had never struck his simple brain to be incompatible with the exigencies of “light marching order,” or of rapid evolutions executed in mountainous and hostile regions. His chest, a specimen of the mechanical skill of the “fatherland,” and which, without forcing a simile, might not unaptly be compared to a sarcophagus, was crammed to overflowing with the *collectanea* of many industriously spent years. Editions of the classics, the works of Goëthe, Schiller, and Lessing, the novels of Dumas and Madame Dudevant, were 7 to be seen commingled with Swedish songbooks, a silver-mounted flute, and a collection of operatic music, an herbarium, instruments of navigation, carpenters' tools, and, in short, materials for tailoring, tinkering, and executing any sort of mechanical work. To cap the collection, there was a heavy, though short and wide-bored rifle, and a bear-trap, which he had brought with him from Stockholm.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the proprietor of this curious medley possessed habits of untiring industry; for, when not engaged in reading, he generally occupied himself with some branch or

other of the arts, although not precisely those that are generally supposed to be akin to or congenial with literary tastes. To sum up his accomplishments, he could translate the plays of the Greek dramatists, solve a problem in Euclid, play the overture to an opera, manufacture a writing-desk, and—I blush to say it—solder a tin kettle. And yet, of these varied acquirements, the poor fellow had never been able to make a single profitable investment, his whole career having been marked by one uninterrupted series of failures and mishaps. Desponding in temperament, and, when under the influence of his morbid fancies, querulous as an old woman, his foibles and eccentricities, combined with the difficulty he experienced in expressing himself in English, afforded infinite amusement to those who, gifted with less good nature than a keen perception of the ridiculous, rendered him the incessant butt of their ungenerous witticisms.

Having attempted to sketch the Swede, the portrait would be incomplete without its attendant shadow, Mr. Eugene O'reilly, a good-hearted fellow in the main, but, like the generality of his countrymen, somewhat addicted to the perpetration of practical jokes—in a word, the Mickey Free of our company. Possessed of an inimitable talent for mimicry, the peculiarities of Wettermark acquired an additional raciness in the imitations of the Irishman, who seemed to hang upon his every accent, and to make him the one great study of his life. It is impossible to describe the irresistible effect of the manner in which, in the Swede's imperfect English and inflated style of reasoning, he represented him as attempting to reconcile the inconsistency of his admiration for the despotic institutions of Germany with his service of a republic—an anomaly, by the by, not unfrequently to be witnessed now-a-days in men of much greater celebrity than poor Wettermark.

O'reilly was not without his own weaknesses, the most prominent and inconvenient of which was a rather exaggerated estimate of his vocal powers. Without a note in his voice that could be strained into the execution of the simplest air, and without the slightest ear for music, he was perpetually inflicting upon us his primitive notions of melody. He accepted the roar of laughter with which these displays were usually received, as a testimony of the high degree of appreciation in which we held them; and, indeed, if he had been susceptible enough to divine the truth, I question if it would have made any difference to him; for such was his uncontrollable love of mischief and fun, that he would sooner enjoy a little merriment at his own expence than be reduced to a state of

inaction for five minutes together. In person he was short, round-featured, and slightly pitted with the smallpox; with an eye that irradiated, by its droll and ever restless expression, an otherwise plain and insignificant face. In short, he was a perfect epitome of Irish virtues and Irish frailties; with a heart that bore rather too large a proportion to the brain; and a vein of humour that rendered him the life and soul of every circle into which he happened to be thrown.

Then we had two disciples of Galen: and, as Nature delights in contrasts, it would be difficult to find two beings more dissimilar in character or appearance. Dr. Freünd was a regularly educated and licensed experimenter on the human frame; while Dr. Judson—Hank Judson, as he was familiarly called—owed the whole of his professional reputation <sup>11</sup> to a certain talent which he possessed for practising on the credulity of the ignorant, having been engaged in the fabrication of some of those patent panaceas which leave little or nothing to be discovered in the shape of remedial agents.

The German physician was a tall, muscular man, with a most forbidding countenance, to which a pair of enormous moustaches imparted additional fierceness. And yet the husk belied the kernel, for no man could be milder or more inoffensive, except when he came in collision with Judson, to whom he seemed to have a sort of natural as well as professional antipathy. Owing to the effects of a long incarceration, to which he had been subjected for some political offence in his own country, he was liable to nervous attacks of a most distressing nature, under the influence of which his powerful frame became convulsed to such a degree, that the exhaustion which succeeded left him as helpless as an infant.

Judson was a thin, wiry little Yankee, with a face like a hatchet, to which the body <sup>12</sup> seemed a slender enough handle, so that his whole appearance was suggestive of a metallic sharpness in strict accordance with his other qualities. Take him as you would, you were sure to strike against some angle or another of his character; and you invariably recoiled from the collision with a sensation of pain. In fact, the aggressive principle seemed so instinctive to his malevolent nature, that his very repose was as much to be dreaded as the watchful inaction of some treacherous animal of the feline tribe.



Freünd took but little pains to conceal his contempt and dislike of the quack; and the latter, being afraid to resort to any overt act of retaliation against his formidable-looking rival, who could have crushed him like an insect, quietly awaited his opportunity until the German was prostrated by one of his periodical attacks. Then, approaching him cautiously, and taking care to maintain a safe distance between them, he commenced the assault in the following ingenious and characteristic manner.

### 13

“How do you feel now, Doctor?” No answer.

“The paroxysm is over, I guess? Now, if you would be guided by my advice—”

A groan and convulsive spasm.

“You would leave off drugging yourself with your sulphates and muriates, which only have the effect of tanning the coats of your stomach—”

*“Oh! verdammter quack!”*

“And of converting you into the shrivelled up and desiccated proportions of an Egyptian mummy. Why, man, your cuticle is already dark enough to make mourning gloves for your family.”

Another groan, the Doctor's eyes rolling wildly about in search of the nearest projectile.

“If you were to study nature more, and your absurd pharmacopoeia less, I calculate you would soon be as slick as a four-year old.”

*“Kreutz donner-wetter!”*

“Why don't you try my hemostatic pills? They are free from minerals, and are composed merely of those simple botanical remedies 14 that prolonged the lives of the patriarchs to the age of the oak, and enabled them to people half the earth.”

“*Der teufel hohl dich* —you tamt charlatan!”

“You licensed practitioners are obstinate creatures. You fancy you know all about pathology and physiology, whilst you actually create the diseases you pretend to treat. I cannot help saying that a more ignorant and benighted set—”

Here this complimentary allocution was suddenly brought to a termination, by a camp stool, which the Doctor's returning strength had placed within his reach, describing sundry gyrations round the Yankee's head, and putting him effectually to flight.

One of the most popular men of the detachment, owing to the amusement which he afforded us, was Johnny Broghan, as genial a little soul as ever ripened into mellowness under the combined influence of love and wine, with a rubicund and oleaginous countenance, stuck forward like an excrescence on a short, puffy figure, and resembling as nearly 15 as possible, in his *ensemble*, that *lusus* of vegetation, a double potato. He had been originally a farmer in Canada, but being unfortunate in his speculations, he had, with characteristic want of judgment, made choice of a military career. He entered a militia regiment in his native province, but, being troubled with a couple of physical peculiarities, which brought him more frequently than was desirable under the notice of his commanding officer, namely, an inability to march in straight lines, or from a defect in the tympanum, to catch the voice of his superiors in the field, he received and gladly accepted an intimation from his Colonel that, as nature had not qualified him to advance the glory of the British arms, he would do well to transfer his services to some other pursuit.

What his motives were for again embracing a profession in which he had cut so unhappy a figure, we never could make out, for his ancient infirmities seemed to have increased instead of diminished; his mode of progression, owing to another little weakness that had 16 subsequently grown upon him, having become more decidedly curvilinear, and his hearing, if possible, more difficult. If you add to these little peculiarities a voice which can no otherwise be described than as the bubble and squeak of some floundering animal, you have Johnny's portrait as nearly as I can sketch it.

Although our commanding officer had been only temporarily placed at our head, and had no intention of accompanying the expedition, it would not be fair to pass him over without notice, inasmuch as it would be difficult to find a more perfect specimen of a class not unfrequently to be met with in the States, although in Europe only familiar to us in the traditions that have consecrated the memory of Major Dalgetty. He was possessed of the true Yankee trading spirit, and regarded the profession of arms in a purely military light. Like his uncle, Colonel Jonathan D. S—, who got such a hard name for his regiment, by charging bayonets on a sheriff's officer, who had disturbed his afternoon *siesta*, it was supposed, I know not with how much justice, 17 that he was in the habit of speculating and gaining largely on the supplies for his men. With all this, he was a favourite with them, for his arrival at the fort was invariably celebrated by “general gaol delivery,” no matter how important the military offence for which the delinquents were confined.

A circumstance, although trivial in itself, which occurred shortly after my arrival, will serve to illustrate thoroughly the character of the man. I have already alluded to the irregularity of the supplies of provisions furnished to us, and on one occasion “the pressure from within” became so great, that several of the scamps of the detachment sallied out at night for a foray through the portholes of the fort, and committed extensive depredations on the neighbouring gardens and poultry-yards. This was beginning the campaign rather early; and the result was, that a strong remonstrance was instantly forwarded to the captain's residence in the city, and he hastened to the fort in anticipation of a mutiny. The men were immediately paraded; 18 but, as usual, the sly smile and whispered jest that passed along the line showed that they laboured under no very great degree of apprehension. Our worthy commander, assuming an air of sternness calculated to make an impression on the injured parties, who were called in to assist at the scene, addressed the detachment in a speech of such indignant eloquence, that it was evident the wound inflicted on his sense of military honour would be difficult to heal. He threatened to inflict the severest punishment on the marauders, in case he should succeed in finding them out—an event, owing to the proverbial good nature of the captain, amongst the remotest of all possible contingencies; and in one short hour after, when the crowd had dispersed, and whilst the tones of his stern admonition were still ringing in our ears, our worthy chief was seated before a fine bird which had formed part of the booty, and

which he pronounced excellent, qualifying his eulogium only by the expression of his regret that, as we had run the risk of taking the 19 turkey, we should have carelessly forgotten the sausages.

Having dashed off these few hurried sketches, in order to give the reader some idea of the heterogeneous elements of which the expedition was composed, it becomes necessary for me to say a few words respecting the organization of the force itself; as otherwise the laxity of discipline apparent in the foregoing details may appear strange to those unacquainted with the volunteer service of the States. The system is based upon the erroneous notion of republican equality being compatible with the requirements of a service which is in itself a pure despotism; for the corporal is as much a despot, with reference to the private soldier, as the commander-in-chief, whose absolute commands all are bound to obey, from the next in authority under him, down to the lowest man in the ranks. In order to soften down the arbitrary distinctions of the military service—distinctions so repugnant to American prejudices, on the score of equality—the men are permitted to choose their own 20 officers; by which means it is supposed their greater alacrity and obedience will be secured, and they themselves rendered more effective than mere mercenaries in the field. But by this compromise there is nothing gained; the individual chosen is either some one who has held out liberal promises of indulgence and license, or some one whom government influence has succeeded in thrusting upon them. The result is, that they have two kinds of officers; a few regularly educated and qualified for their position, but by far the greater number inexperienced and unequal to the responsibilities of military command, and whose conflicting notions of its duties and requirements give rise to dissension, disobedience, and disorder. In addition to the privilege I have mentioned, the volunteer enjoys others denied to the regular soldier. He chooses his own uniform, receives larger pay, and serves a shorter period; for which, and many other reasons, he considers himself comparatively a free agent, and possessing a right to exemption from the severe discipline of the army.

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I may, however, state, that the volunteers have frequently found themselves placed under officers, who, although disposed to indulge them to the very verge of weakness, were not inclined to concede to them their assumed right of disobedience, and who have not failed, in cases of

insubordination, to teach them that, notwithstanding the many privileges they enjoy, they are, for the term of their service, as much bound by the regulations of the army as the regular forces, and equally punishable for offences against discipline. But the volunteers never can become thorough soldiers, under the present system; and I feel convinced that nothing but their individual daring and courage, under the direction of the few properly trained military men whose judgment and determination guided their reckless valour, and brought it to bear at the opportune moment, could have carried them through the many dangers they had to encounter, or enabled them to accomplish as much as they effected during the Mexican war.

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## CHAPTER II.

The Departure—Tribulations on Board—The Greeneyed Monster—The rail to Philadelphia—On Board again—Captain Briggs' elocution—The Atlantic—Scenes and incidents at Sea—Crossing the Line—A Wreck—News of Friends—Arrival at Rio de Janeiro.

The 15th of August, the day of our departure, at length arrived, with its excitement, its regrets, its bustle, and its leave-takings. We were going, at last; but whither, few amongst us knew, and many cared not: indeed, as I have before said, none of us entertained any very sanguine ideas of ever returning; for, at this period, the steadier portion of the community regarded a voyage to California in the light of an enterprise approximating in sanity to an expedition to the moon, respecting which, in fact, much more was known. Nevertheless, the scene was one <sup>23</sup> suggestive of varied emotions, and pregnant with interest and strong contrast. The band played cheering airs, but the loud sobs of relatives and friends about to separate, perhaps for ever, imparted deep melancholy to strains intended to be mirthful.

Here and there, lovers had coupled off, and were making the most of the few remaining minutes they had to spend together; a melancholy enjoyment participated in by several married pairs, whose affectionate and prolonged farewell conveyed a tacit reproach to sundry other couples, who, in the bustle of the embarkation, were exchanging unconjugal compliments respecting the due stowage

of the baggage and the children! In another place were brothers, bidding adieu to tearful mothers and sisters, and to fathers who manfully checked the tide of grief as it sought its natural exit. Of this class, but apart from the rest, were two fine young men, between whom the ties of consanguinity or of friendship had been drawn so close, as to render this parting the bitterest and most affecting 24 of all the painful incidents passing around us. I never saw two beings more completely unmanned, as they stood side by side, with hands convulsively clasped together, and the briny flood pouring in a torrent down their cheeks, presenting a picture of such intense anguish, as to attract the attention even of those who had their own sorrows to occupy them.

We were so crowded, on board the schooner which was to convey us down to the steamer, that there ensued an incessant struggle on deck for breathing room: to walk about was impossible; to stand or to sit with comfort equally so; and below, suffocation appeared imminent. To increase our tribulation and uneasiness, we had to encounter the pangs of hunger; for we discovered that the cook had abandoned his post, and that there was no dinner. At about eleven at night, we lay to off Castle Garden, when the outcry for food became so resolute, that our first lieutenant found it imperative to send ashore for provisions. The embassy, however, not 25 producing any result, inasmuch as the caterers did not make their appearance, it was judged advisable, about midnight, to despatch a second party in search of the delinquents, whom they found regaling themselves, and utterly oblivious of the cravings of their companions on board. The two parties returned together, bringing a scanty supply of bread and cheese and beer, which rapidly disappeared, the distribution of the former being pretty fair, but that of the liquid being regulated by the law of the strongest and most enterprising. However, in spite of short commons, comparative contentment was beginning to manifest itself, when the cry of "Murder!" was suddenly uttered, in a piercing scream, by one of the women. There was a general rush to the hatch whence the shriek had proceeded, and where one of the sergeants and a lieutenant were seen engaged in what appeared a deadly struggle, each striving to throw the other overboard. The officer, being the stronger man, soon succeeded in mastering his adversary, and, dragging him over the hatch, let 26 him drop down, head over heels, greatly to the consternation and damage of those below.

We never heard anything more of the affair, save that the fracas had originated in the marital jealousy of the sergeant, whose very pretty spouse having become the object of marked attention on the part of the lieutenant, the husband had resented the insult, by attempting to cool the ardour of his superior in the manner related. Neither party sustained much injury; the husband came off worst, he having received a few severe contusions, from which he did not recover for a considerable time; whilst his opponent scarcely got a scratch, although his attire suffered greatly. As no further notice was taken by the principals, I concluded that the act of military insubordination was accepted as a set-off against the breach of morality on the part of the lieutenant, and that this understanding, although tacit, was perfectly satisfactory to both.

With the exception of this incident, nothing occurred to disturb our reflections 27 during the cold night that followed, nor to relieve the monotony of the remainder of our journey to the steamer, on board of which we embarked at eight o'clock next morning, continuing the excursion, without interruption, until we reached the railway station in Jersey, where we took the cars for Philadelphia.

The trip to the latter city was very pleasant, but outrageously noisy, for the entire detachment waxing patriotic, never ceased shouting “The Star-spangled Banner,” “Columbia the Gem of the Ocean,” and similar national effusions; but as each individual—true to his republican principles—sang independently of every one else, and the melodies were arbitrarily disfigured by a running accompaniment of shakes, caused by the unevenness of the rails, the effect of the whole was rather more startling than imposing or harmonious. At least, I judged so from the astonishment depicted upon the countenances of the villagers, as they rushed out, with open mouth and eyes astare, to gaze at us, as we were whisked past their quiet habitations.

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On our arrival at Philadelphia, we repaired on board the *Isabella*, a fine packet-ship commanded by Captain George Briggs, to whose experience, good sense, equable conduct, and mild and gentlemanly deportment, I have much pleasure in here recording my testimony: qualities which

secured him the good will and esteem of all who enjoyed the advantage of communication with him.

Here our *quondam* military captain took unexpected leave of us in a remarkable speech, which called his white pocket-handkerchief into active service. We all—except O'reilly—gave him credit for the regret he expressed at being obliged, on account of the state of his health, to forego the pleasure of accompanying us in our campaigns. He certainly did shed a tear or two; but O'reilly stoutly maintained that they had been produced by a certain well-known artificial appliance. Of course this was a mere opinion, although the expression of it involved him in many an amusing dispute.

The accommodations below consisted of 29 two tiers of bunks, or berths, one above the other, at each side, being just sufficient for our number. They were unprovided with beds or mattresses, blankets being considered sufficiently luxurious for men about to encounter the perils attendant upon a pioneering expedition into an unknown country. A place in the after part of the vessel, which had been bulwarked off for an hospital, was at once invaded and appropriated by the married men, for the use of themselves and wives, there being five couples of the party. Of course, there was a struggle for the bachelors' berths, which was decided in favour of those who were best able to do battle for them; and happy were the few, during that long six months, who on this occasion secured for themselves a berth near the gangways and hatches, and thereby a constant supply of light and fresh air!

We left Philadelphia on the nineteenth of August, 1847, and proceeded slowly down the Delaware, which was so shallow, in some places, and so winding in its course, as to offer serious obstacles to the progress of the 30 larger craft. However, the weather was delightful, and topics of conversation never failed.

On our way down, our worthy captain took an opportunity of addressing his crew; and, as his speech was both pithy and characteristic, I thought it not unworthy a place in my note-book.



“Men,” said he, “we are beginning a long voyage, and I wish to give you a few words of advice. Do your duty, and we shall remain good friends; neglect it, and you will find out who is master. Don't interfere with the volunteers: your duties are distinct from theirs; and the less you have to do with them the better.” (Complimentary! thought I.) “Lastly, avoid profane language and swearing, which are unbecoming to any man, even to a sailor; but if you must swear, I beg of you, as a favour, to let me have the benefit of the first oath. You may now go for'ard.”

Here we are, gliding over the vast Atlantic, and drawing near to Rio Janeiro, distant now 31 only a few degrees. What thoughts are suggested by this wide and dreary expanse of waters! How it makes us turn to home and friends! As the frail but buoyant vessel plunges into the blue depths of the ocean, how strongly do we feel that nature's ties are not loosely cast around our hearts! Home and friends!—words of which the deep significancy is unfelt, until solitude such as this clothes them with vitality, and brings them tangibly into our presence, only, as it seems, to remind us the more forcibly that it is but the starting of a plank, or the matter of a hole not larger than one's thumb, and home, and friends, and past, and present, are no more!

Our life on board was not of the pleasantest description, on account of the motley elements that entered into the composition of our society. A band of volunteers, bound for a distant region, upon a roaming expedition, in search of better fortune, was not likely to prove other than a medley of characters, of various degrees of respectability, 32 and this not of average quality. Indeed, the scenes that occasionally occurred raised many a pang in my heart for the females who were compelled to witness them. In one young woman I took a deep interest. She was about twenty years of age, of handsome features, and symmetrical form, and had evidently been well educated, and accustomed to move in good society. She was the wife of a good-looking young fellow, possessing abilities far above the ordinary range, and who had been the editor of a newspaper; but, unable to turn his literary talents to profitable account, he had joined the expedition with the intention of settling in California. I used often to see her shudder, as she sat behind the scanty curtain which formed the only barrier between her berth and the quarters of the single men, whose profane and too

often immodest language shocked her ear, and caused her to ply her needle the more diligently at some linen of miniature dimensions which it was manifest would ere long come into requisition.

### 33

The between-decks were usually blocked up by boxes and trunks, and baggage of various descriptions, piled up and disposed in the most awkward positions imaginable, such as were available serving for seats and tables, at which the members of our company sat and played at cards, or other games of chance, cheating one another, when the opportunity presented itself; swearing lustily when their dishonesty was detected, or the tide of luck had set against them; and not unfrequently terminating their disputations and games by a general engagement, in which such missiles as were nearest to hand came into closer contact with individual heads and faces than was altogether pleasant for those who officiated as mere spectators.

This propensity for gambling, which seemed to be very prevalent, was, on one occasion, productive of a scene that well nigh terminated fatally. The parties compromised were a Mr. B—and his wife; the latter a very young and rather pretty woman, but with “shew” very legibly written on her features. 34 She had often, it seems, remonstrated with, then rated, then abused him, for indulging in this fatal passion, which necessarily impoverished them. He turned a deaf ear, however, to her remonstrances, and was equally proof against her abuse. On the evening in question she became so exasperated, that she seized a knife that he wore in his waist-belt, and dealt him a blow which, if it had struck him as intended, must have stretched him a corpse at her feet. Fortunately, she missed her aim, owing to his nimbleness in evading the stroke, which, descending upon his bare arm—for he had his shirt-sleeves tucked up—laid it open, inflicting a ghastly wound. Regardless of this mischief, and, possibly, apprehensive of a second attack, he dexterously closed with her, and wrung the weapon from her grasp, completing his victory by bearing her bodily to the ground, on which he held her as in a vice; until, after a determined conflict for the space of fifteen minutes, her strength gave way, and she succumbed. The horror of this scene few who beheld it will 35 ever forget. Even in the midst of her struggles, she strove to bite; and, failing to revenge herself in this manner, spat in his face and kicked him, reckless of decency; finally, giving vent to her fury in language perfectly appalling in atrocity. Several peacemakers stepped forward, and we believed

their efforts had succeeded in allaying the tempest; when, on being liberated, she suddenly sprung upon her infant; and, with her hair all dishevelled, her face flushed with rage, and her eyes glaring with the frenzy of unnatural excitement, rushed up the companion-ladder, and made for the side of the vessel, evidently bent upon sacrificing the little infant, and, possibly, herself. She was frustrated in her murderous intent by the interposition of the Captain, who snatched the child out of her arms, and forcibly detained her by pinning her back against the bulwarks. He remonstrated with her very sensibly, but, I fear, with little permanent effect; although the result of his admonition was to bring the tears into her eyes, and to send her back, much dejected, 36 into the cabin where her husband was having his wound dressed.

A portion of the vessel amid-ships, which had been taken possession of by a dense multitude of traders and speculators, acquired, from this circumstance, the nickname of “Chatham Street,” or the “Jewry,” the majority being Israelites, or their connexions. The shuffling, the confusion, the noise, and the chaffering, were indescribable, varied as the scene was by falls over boxes, and trunks, and bales of miscellaneous merchandize, and by “rough-and-tumble” fights, to say nothing of the jargon of tongues from every known country and kingdom, interspersed with the strangest oaths, the oddest jests, and the quaintest commentaries upon the quality, price, and manufacture, of the heterogeneous mass of articles put up for sale. We were nearing Rio, and, therefore, every one wanted money, and sought to procure it as best he could. As we proceeded, the love of barter appeared to increase, until it degenerated from legitimate trading into a system of 37 gambling, disguised under the name of “raffles,” the chances being dependant upon the cast of dice; thus many articles were disposed of, which, but for this ingenious resource, would probably have remained on hand.

I may here mention, that, amongst other modes of passing the time, the volunteers resorted to a recreation far more amusing to the spectators on such occasions, and to the actors in the comedy, than to him who was selected to figure the most prominently in it. This was called “blanketing,” the nature of which operation is, doubtless, sufficiently familiar to all not to require a special description at my hands. It was not, at any time, decidedly popular; but so inveterate was the love of mischief in Judson, O'reilly, and a few others, and so strong the party they got together to support

them, that remonstrance and resistance were alike unavailing when they presented themselves to seize the victim on whom their evil eye had fallen. Appeal to the Captain was alike useless; he stuck hard and fast to his text of “not 38 interfering with the volunteers, so long as they endangered no lives by their pranks;” thus, almost every one's turn came round in time, although, from some cause I am unable to explain, mine was deferred until the last. But I was not disposed to submit to the fate of the immortal Sancho Panza without at least making a stand against what I considered to be an invasion of individual rights; and, receiving from one of my companions an intimation that my hour was come, and my tormentors at hand, I made a bolt into the berths of the married folks, into which *sanctum* the band, however reckless and alive for mischief, durst not penetrate. In vain they called upon me to “come out and be tossed like a man.” In vain Judson assured me, on the faith of his own experience, that “it was nothing more than a mouthful of wind.” In vain O'reilly urged, as an additional inducement, that, if I would only “thry it once, he'd be tossed with me for company.” I was not to be seduced. On the other hand, my companions were obstinate; a council was 39 held, in which the two parties I have named took the lead. I was in hopes they had renounced their project: not at all, as the sequel will show. They had withdrawn, and I was about to repair to my bunk, after waiting some time, to make sure my tormentors were not lying in ambush; when suddenly there appeared the corporal of the guard, heading a file of men, their purpose being, as I was forthwith informed, to arrest me for violating the sanctity of the married quarters. Compelled to yield to this authority, I came out of my sanctuary; when a loud laugh and a dance of exultation proclaimed the whole manœuvre to be a mere *ruse-de-guerre*, devised to make me desert my place of refuge.

Another moment, and words, like myself, would have been literally tossed to the winds. But I was resolute and indignant, and, drawing my bowie-knife, made so threatening a demonstration with it, that the foremost fell back much disconcerted. I did not, however, intend murder. I had certainly yielded to an awkward impulse of self-defence, but 40 reflection instantly shamed me into putting up my knife again; though I did not feel the more disposed to surrender my person to the tender mercies of my mischievous friends. Retaining then a defensive attitude, or, more properly speaking, a wary one, I ventured to remonstrate temperately but firmly on the absurdity of their conduct, not to give it a harsher name. My preachment was received with shouts of derision, and I doubt

not but the affair would have terminated in a scuffle, had it not been for O'reilly, who shouted out, "Come away, boys!—the fellow isn't worth a toss up. Sure, we're wasting our precious time thriving to thrive taste into him, and Mr. Judson here a longing all the while to have another swim in the air." So saying, and giving the hint to the others, the unlucky Judson took my place in the blanket, and, judging from the peals of laughter which I soon afterwards heard, was operated upon to the satisfaction of the rioters.

I have no reason to believe that the ceremonies usually observed on crossing the line 41 were shorn of any of their magnificence on the occasion of our passage. I confess I felt some surprise on beholding his Oceanic Majesty suddenly appear on deck—quite fresh from the coral caves of his dominions, as we were informed, wearing a brand-new New York "rowdy" hat, and with a face as black as the ace of spades; a fact, by the way, which O'reilly accounted for by stating, that the god of the ocean had just come back from sweeping Mount Vesuvius, which every body knew "wasn't asy to cure of smoking." However, as his Majesty's beard was unexceptionably classical, and his behests were not to be disputed, we took our turns at the tub, and submitted, with as good a grace as we could muster, to the tar-brush and iron hoop, although I am bound in honesty to admit, the attempt to assume a pleasant countenance under these circumstances proved a general failure. Altogether, the ceremony passed off without any disagreeable incident; the fun, which was, as may be conceived, of the most rough and boisterous sort, lasting until every 42 one had passed the ordeal, or paid the fine exacted for immunity.

Shortly before we reached Rio, there was great commotion on board one morning, occasioned by the look-out descriing a dismayed vessel, which, upon nearing, we discovered to be the "Mameluke." She was the first craft of any kind that we had made out since we sailed; and the excitement consequent upon falling in with one under such distressing circumstances may be more readily imagined than described. She lay on her star-board beam-ends, completely waterlogged, her masts gone by the board, her larboard bul-warks carried away, and the best portion of her cabin-front staved in by the force of the heavy seas she had encountered, and which were now making a clean breach over her, for the weather was very rough and squally. She appeared to be strongly built, and could not long have left port, as her timbers were new, and her paint still fresh. We

strained our eyes in vain in search of crew or passengers; but of these, living or dead, there were no 43 vestiges. We earnestly desired to board her, and several volunteers presented themselves to undertake the perilous service; but the Captain observed, that even a whale-boat could not possibly live on such a sea, and peremptorily refused to endanger the life of any of his crew; “uselessly,” he added, “as he felt assured the wreck had been abandoned.” We were compelled to submit to what I have every reason to believe was a wise determination; but the incident furnished food for much painful speculation, and produced a melancholy impression on all.

Shortly after, we spoke the Brutus; it was then quite dusk, and tolerably calm. She was returning to New York from California; and we learned, with much pleasure, that the body of volunteers she had conveyed thither had arrived safely at their destination. We received this intelligence with three cheers, it being regarded as a favourable omen, and in the afternoon of the 29th of October we entered the port of Rio de Janeiro.

44

### CHAPTER III.

Rio de Janeiro—Bumboat Joe—Symptoms of mutiny aboard—Volunteer discipline—Scenes on shore—Slaves and slavery—Visit to a monastery—A frolic and its consequences—Glorious news—Adieu to Rio.

We cast anchor at a considerable distance from the town, and not far from a small English war-craft, of which we had clumsily run foul whilst coming round to our position, though without doing or receiving much damage. The harbour and the town have been so frequently and so well described, that I shall content myself with stating little more than that both are eminently picturesque. The former is partially surrounded with lofty and shadowy hills, which seen early in the morning, before the sun has entirely dispersed the mists peculiar to this latitude, with the houses of the town peeping out of the vapours as they roll up the romantic declivities and crags 45 on which they are erected, for the most part, overtopped here and there by an ancient church of quaintest architecture, or by an equally venerable monastery, retaining in its age the evidences of

its early strength—I say, that seen through this medium particularly, or in the full brightness of the noonday sun, or again at eveningtide, or, lastly, when the moon is shedding its silvery lustre over the scene, the landscape presents one of those charming pictures which poets sometimes dream of in their fictions, but which artists may never hope to realize in portraiture upon their canvass.

We had not got comfortably moored when we were besieged by a fleet of bumboats, as they are called, veritable canoes, paddled in true Indian style, and manned by swarthy-complexioned men and women, more than three parts naked, all striving to be first in the scramble to supply us with bananas, plantains, water-melons, cakes, cheese, bread, sardines, cigars, &c., articles which disappeared with a celerity savouring of magic, for 46 such delicacies were unknown on board. The confusion was immense, and the supply of edibles unequal to the demand, until Bumboat Joe—the Napoleon of these aquatic caterers—appeared in proper person, bringing an abundance of similar luxuries, so that at length every one procured a sufficiency. I may mention, *en passant*, that Joe is a character well known to those who frequent the South Atlantic shores. He is about four feet six in height, but I will not venture upon a calculation of his girth. To say he is as broad as he is long, would fail to convey any adequate idea of his outline; but if the reader can fancy an animated butter-firkin propped up on two nine-pins, and surmounted by a Dutch cheese, he may realize a faint image of Bumboat Joe. He is a great favourite amongst the sailors, on account of his drollness, not only of appearance, but of speech, which is a cross of his own, between English and Portuguese, the latter being his native tongue. He is about fifty years of age, and has passed the whole of his life in a bumboat. He is 47 reputed wealthy, and I have no doubt report, in this instance, speaks truth, although his appearance would have justified one in giving him a trifle for charity's sake, if one had chanced to meet him in the street.

We soon learned that our stay at Rio would be limited to the time necessary to repair our vessel—of which the foremast had received severe damage during a recent heavy gale—and to take in a proper supply of provisions, to wit, fresh biscuit and salt horse; for I may as well mention here, that the ordinary regulations with regard to victualling us had not been acted upon, probably because we were *only volunteers*, or irregulars, and irregularity in everything connected with us, or with our comforts, was considered a matter of course. However, in consequence of certain remonstrances

addressed to the Consul, some of the officers belonging to the flag-ship Ohio—not unworthily called the pride of the American navy—boarded us, and soon after sent a portion of her crew to assist in repairing our damage, and in getting the requisite stores on 48 board. As we were thus given to believe that our stay would be a short one, we became extremely anxious to make the most of our time ashore, where we were permitted to go in regular turns.

On one of these occasions, one of our comrades involved himself in rather an awkward scrape. Having been indulging in deep potations, he picked a quarrel with the first Spaniard that he met, and, by way of a joke, knocked him down; but scarcely was the blow struck, than he was surrounded by eight armed soldiers, who, to carry the jest a little further, conveyed him to the black-hole, in which he soon found himself in the pleasant society of a select number of the *lazzaroni* of Rio. He was searched, and a knife being found upon him, the case assumed rather a serious aspect; for, in consequence of several sanguinary frays having occurred between the Spanish and the American irregulars, who seemed ever on the alert for mischief of this sort, the local government had determined to make an example of the next offender. What 49 penalty would have been inflicted upon him I cannot take upon myself to say. I know that it was only by the greatest interest that his liberation was at length procured, and even then at the latest possible moment. However, we were very glad to see him again amongst us, notwithstanding that the peculiar diet of the black-hole had extinguished his sprightliness, and considerably reduced him in bulk. The following incident will furnish another illustration of the free-and-easy discipline of our corps:

One of our men asked leave one day to go ashore, which was refused, as it was his turn to remain on board. Upon this, a furious quarrel ensued between him and the second lieutenant, who had mortally offended him by this refusal, and the result was, that the refractory volunteer was put into irons and kept a close prisoner for several days. But he was not disposed to let the matter end there; and spying a boat shortly after his release, he beckoned the boatman alongside, and slid down into his canoe, bidding him make in all 50 haste for the shore. His escape was soon discovered, and the second lieutenant roared out to him most lustily to come back. But the delinquent thrust a piece of money into the hand of the boatman, who, puzzled what to do, had ceased pulling, and folding his arms, stood upright in the boat, whistling “Yankee Doodle.” Again the officer shouted, again



the boatman stopped, and a second piece of money again induced him to continue pulling towards shore. Perceiving that shouts availed nothing, half a dozen men were ordered to the side of the ship; the second lieutenant gave the word to “make ready;” still the boat proceeded: “present;” she quickened her speed: “fire;” and fire they did, but at some imaginary object somewhere about a mile above the head of the fugitive, for your true American volunteer knows better than to shoot his brother-in-arms, under such circumstances. When the smoke of their pieces had blown aside, the bold fellow who had put us all in such a fright was seen, still erect in the boat, with his thumb to the tip of his 51 nose, his fingers playfully keeping time to the tune he was whistling, and extended towards the spot where the second lieutenant was standing, rating the men for being such bad shots. A few minutes more, and the runaway was capering about on the beach, like a drunken Indian.

It so chanced that my turn ashore came next in rotation, and that I and two others received instructions to arrest the culprit, and bring him back with us; but I soon discovered that, whatever might be my own ideas on the subject, nothing was farther from the intention of my companions than to obey these orders. Indeed, the mutinous spirit on board had developed itself to such an extent, in consequence of the restrictions imposed on the liberty of the volunteers, that one morning there came from the Ohio, with other articles, an extra supply of handcuffs for the special use of the refractory. With reference to the errand on which we were sent, I finally reasoned myself into the conviction, that it would be best for me to prove myself a 52 thorough volunteer, and, though I had respectfully received my orders, to follow the example of my companions, and please my own inclination about obeying them. When I state that my two comrades were O'reilly and Judson, no surprise will be manifested at my forming so wise a resolution.

We landed in high spirits, and were soon, as O'reilly expressed it, “throwing our eyes about us.” I was greatly delighted with the town, on account of the varied scenes it presented; but as we turned the corner of one of the streets, my thoughts were suddenly diverted into a very different channel by our stumbling all at once upon several African slaves, more of whom we subsequently met in almost every second thoroughfare. They were unmanacled it is true, but the brand of ownership had left its indelible stamp upon their flesh, in all the horrible variety that the fancy or caprice of their taskmasters could devise. Rows of hideous lumps on the cheek, indentations seared into the

forehead, ugly scars on the neck, and in numerous instances 53 clipped and otherwise disfigured ears, attested a refinement of torture characteristic of but one portion of this accursed system. “With such marks upon them, how can these poor creatures ever be free?” thought I. The chains and the manacles are not there, it is true; from these they may escape. But from the brand of the red-hot iron, which has once marked their bodies as the property of their fellow-men, not even the abolition of human bondage, and the emancipation of the race, can ever enable them to flee.

I may here mention, incidentally to this subject, that one dark night one of our crew was caught in the act of putting off in the water-boat to a slaver that lay snugly to in a remote corner of the harbour. He confessed that the captain of the slaver—who, I well remember, had been on board our vessel a few days previously—had made him tempting offers to induce him to join his ship on the next cruise. He yielded, but, as I have observed, was apprehended in the act of desertion. The same captain had tampered with the other 54 men, who, however, remained true to their colours.

To return to our rambles on shore: we made for the monastery on the hill, where we were extremely well received and hospitably entertained. I was much struck with the appearance, manners, and intelligence of one of the monks, a man of tall stature and lean habit of body, but remarkably handsome, and of a most benevolent countenance. I tried my Spanish, but could not get on, and he was equally at a loss to make us understand his English. Fortunately, I bethought me of my French, in which he was proficient, and I was appointed interpreter. My office proved no sinecure; for what with the inquisitiveness of my Yankee friend, the volubility of O'reilly, and the cross-questioning of the priest, I found enough to do. Our conversation embraced a variety of topics, as may readily be supposed. The monk asked me all sorts of questions about England, her institutions, people, commerce, and so forth; interrogated the Yankee respecting the States, Congress, Zachary Taylor, 55 and the progress of railways; and lastly, discovering that O'reilly was an Irishman, puzzled him uncommonly with queries relating to the history of his country, Catholic Emancipation, the Union, &c., which it excited my admiration to see him evade, when he could not coax his memory for facts. The name of Daniel o'Connell arising, however, naturally enough in the course of this conversation, O'reilly found himself in a new element: and the monk professing high respect for the Agitator, and regretting that circumstances had precluded him from ever seeing or hearing him,

O'reilly volunteered a specimen of his style and manner of oratory, which I have not the smallest hesitation in saying Mr. o'Connell would have been sorely puzzled to identify, although it answered the purpose intended, namely, to gratify our friendly recluse, of whom we shortly after took leave, with numerous protestations expressive of mutual satisfaction and good-will.

We resumed our peregrinations until it was growing late in the evening. I began to think 56 about the ship, but my companions, whose libations had awakened their spirit of mischief, vowed they would not return until they had had some fun; to which O'reilly added, "And a thrifle of a scrimmage, just to keep our hands in." Remonstrances were useless, and flight impracticable, for I was safely secured on each side, and I resigned myself to my fate, which I anticipated would soon be incarceration with the *lazzaroni*. In this mood, we came upon the "Plaza," at the lower end of which we espied the carriage of the Emperor, drawn up in front of one of the large houses, and around it several of our comrades standing admiringly. A shout of glee, simultaneous with the recognition, rang through the square, and then a council was held to determine what mischievous frolic we should perpetrate. O'reilly cast a side-look at the unoccupied carriage, at the stately coachman on the box, and at the magnificently liveried domestics who were chatting lazily in the doorway. He said something to Judson, who whispered it to a second, and both proceeded very leisurely to 57 mount on the box. At the same moment, O'reilly seized me by the arm, and, opening the carriage-door, pushed me headlong in, tumbling over my heels as he followed me, and calling out to our companions to make haste after us, as there was plenty of room. No guards were near, and the servants appeared to be taken so much by surprise at the boldness of this absurd prank, that they had not time to prevent us from thus committing ourselves, or perhaps were deterred by our determined aspect from attempting it. Under the pressure of a naked bayonet on each side of him, the coachman whipped his horses, and we dashed off at full speed, up one street, down another, and across a third, at the imminent risk of "a spill" at every corner, and to the wonderment of the good citizens of Rio, who had never before seen his Imperial Majesty's family in such a hurry to go nowhere.

But this state of things could not continue, and we were soon warned of an approaching climax, by the shouts of the crowd, now in hot pursuit of us, and by the turning out of the 58 guard, as

we again neared the Plaza, whence we had started. With great dexterity, Judson seized the reins, and brought the vehicle to a stand-still, with a jolt that caused the inside-passengers to rub noses, after rather a disagreeable fashion. To “bonnet” the coachman, to slip down from the box, and to disappear, were the work of a moment with him, nor were we slow to vacate our seats, upon becoming alive to our peril. We had great difficulty, nevertheless, in extricating ourselves from the few who had even now come up with us; but, thanks to our resolution, to the nimbleness of our legs, to our doublings and turnings round dark corners, and, above all, to our good luck, and the darkness, we contrived to escape into a by-street, where we came full-tilt upon our friend Judson, who had entered it at the other end. We determined to part company here; and accordingly, Judson, O'reilly, and myself, departed in one direction, and our four companions in another, our intention being to explore our way to the shore singly, and get back to the ship as 59 fast as we could. As ill-luck would have it, upon turning into a neighbouring street, we unexpectedly came upon the delinquent whom we had received orders to arrest. By way of a joke, O'reilly instantly collared him, exclaiming, “Here's the chap that we've been hunting all day! You must come with us, my fine fellow.” But the man was not inclined to surrender, and, believing O'reilly to be in earnest, assumed a menacing attitude; shaking his capturer off, and drawing a long bowie-knife, he swore he would have the heart's blood of the first of us who attempted to lay hands upon him. He was fearfully excited, being still under the influence of intoxication; and I doubt not but he would have been as good as his word, had not O'reilly burst out laughing, assuring him that nothing was further from our intention than to spoil his frolic ashore, after he had been so long at sea, though, if he were “in the mind for a bit of a fight, he was his man—just for the fun of the thing.”

I cannot say how this affair would have terminated, as, in spite of O'reilly's assurances, 60 the man seemed disinclined to believe him, although his companions—three more of our comrades, and one of them a sergeant of the same company—were zealous in their endeavours to pacify him; the difficulty was solved, however, by our hearing the tramp of the guard and the noise of voices, which, reminding us of our recent exploit rather unpleasantly, we again took to our heels, and finally succeeded in reaching our vessel.

Our excessively foolish adventure might have ended seriously, if the inquiry which followed it had resulted in a discovery of the perpetrators of the mischief. But of course nobody knew anything about it; and notwithstanding dates, circumstances, and suspicions, the impossibility of identifying us put an end to the investigation. At the time, however, I strongly suspected that the extraordinary celerity with which the remainder of our stores was shipped, subsequently to a long interview between our captain and the consul, was mainly due to this event, and our departure thereby considerably accelerated.

61

I may likewise record it as an historical episode, that, during our sojourn, news arrived of the victorious achievements of the American troops, the capture of Monterey, and the triumphant march into the city of Mexico. This intelligence perhaps it was that caused us to hail our proximate departure with increased satisfaction, moreover contributing so largely to the good humour of our superiors, that our runaway comrade escaped with a reprimand, which O'reilly likened to "a mouthful of new-milk," so mild was its nature. Under these circumstances, then, we sailed from Rio, after a sojourn of three weeks, which, for all we did there, or that required to be done, might have been limited to one without any inconvenience.

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#### **CHAPTER IV.**

Cape Horn—Valparaiso—Mutiny aboard—A midnight alarm—A gale—Disappointed hopes—Monterey—The Californians—The fandango—A novel compliment—Our quarters—A fray in the town—The lions.

No circumstance of any importance occurred during our passage towards Cape Horn, that redoubtable bugbear to landsmen. We encountered rough weather and smooth, tempests and calms, and contrived to kill the time as well as could be expected. A shoal of porpoises and a stray shark or two would now and then vary the monotony of our fishing, of which I for one became extremely fond; beyond this, everything was very dull, and the days as much alike as the bonitas, or skip-

jacks, we used to hook. The harpooning of a porpoise, however, usually put us into good spirits for a few hours, on account of the bustle incidental to bringing him safely to deck, and afterwards cutting the monster up, cooking, and eating him—that is, as much of him as could be eaten. I cannot say I was sufficiently epicurean in my tastes to relish this marine delicacy, which was neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor vegetable, but a cross between them all, with a dash of sea-weed; but the majority of my companions seemed to enjoy it amazingly.

I had heard and read so much of Cape Horn, and of the dangers of the passage—rounding, or doubling it, as the sailors call it—that I experienced considerable disappointment on finding ourselves becalmed off this interesting point of the great American continent. At the special request of the captain, I took a sketch of it, though it possesses no pretensions to picturesque beauty. It rises out of the ocean, a perpendicular mass of rocks, towering to a formidable height, in piles of abrupt crags, unadorned with a particle of vegetation, the summit clad in a snowy mantle, drooping to a considerable distance down the sides; the entire heap is an emblem of barrenness.

64

We lay for some days off Cape Horn, suffering all the annoyances incidental to a dead calm at sea; but at last a breeze sprung up, and, soon freshening into a lively gale, we stretched our canvass to it, and rapidly lost sight of land.

On the 30th December, the look-out gave notice of our being off the coast of Chili, whose brown hills we were shortly after able to descry. I observed that they seemed pretty well covered with pasture, but were—like the entire coast of South America, on the Pacific side—entirely devoid of those masses of lofty trees generally so essential to the beauty of a landscape. True it is that chains of mountains, rearing their proud crests into the clouds, a succession of hills clad in nature's choicest verdure, and rocks broken into every variety of form, as seen through the mellow atmosphere of these dreamy latitudes, possess a novelty which has a great charm; nevertheless, remembering the scenery of my own native land, I found out what I considered to be the great characteristic deficiency of the 65 scene before me, and sighed for the presence of the umbrageous

creations of our own woods and forests, where shade and shelter are alike found from sun and shower.

On the first day of the new year, we anchored off the port of Valparaiso, but in consequence of the irregularities our volunteers had been guilty of at Rio, a general prohibition was issued against any of us going ashore, a mandate which caused immense excitement, and considerably diminished the popularity of the officer whose duty it was to publish it; much against his will, no doubt, for he was most kind and indulgent. It was announced, also, that we should set sail again at four o'clock, as soon as we had replenished our stores; so some of us made up our minds to be happy on board, and orderly. Scarcely half an hour had elapsed, however, before it was discovered that the captain's gig had disappeared, and with her several of our men. This was sufficient to stir up the dormant spirit of mutiny, and immediately there ensued a general rush to the gangway, for the purpose of boarding a lighter that lay alongside, empty. In vain the guard was turned out, and the officer on duty remonstrated; the men disappeared over the side, like so many eels; nor was I one of the last. We got cleverly away, giving three groans a-piece for the lieutenants of our respective companies. The result of our hardihood was, that the will of the majority—as in all true republican institutions it ought—carried the day, and those who were compelled to stay on board because there was no boat to bring them ashore soon procured the necessary permission, and harmony was re-established; but our departure was postponed until next day.

Whilst we were on shore, Johnny Broghan distinguished himself by getting outrageously intoxicated, by which indulgence he did not improve the directness of his very singular gait. In spite, however, of his many eccentricities, he would probably have come off as well as the rest, but he suddenly took it into his head to begin shouting, at the top of his voice, “The Enniskillen Dragoons!”<sup>67</sup> accompanying the air with such a profusion of military flourishes with his bayonet, that, for fear of accidents, and possibly because the Chilians were indifferent judges of vocal music, he was soon marched off to the black-hole, where, we were given to understand, his valour evaporated in a sound sleep.

About midnight, we were all startled, in the midst of our merriment, by an alarming discharge of musketry and cannon, which we soon ascertained had proceeded from on board our vessel. It was “the boys” on board saluting the year 1848, much to the consternation of the town, and to the discomfort of the fleet of boats that put off to learn the cause of the clatter.

I can say of Valparaiso only that it is a very pretty city, situated in a valley, with houses—chiefly of the poorer sort—picturesquely built on the declivities of the hillside. Amongst the most remarkable I may mention two houses of entertainment, which from their position the sailors have nicknamed the “maintop” and the “mizentop.”<sup>68</sup> The population, as far as I could judge, is chiefly composed of the Spanish and the Indian races, the women being generally both handsome and good-natured, with a weakness for the Americans. I saw very few negroes. The climate is said to be healthy, and the country produces abundance of vegetables, amongst which are potatoes of the finest kind I have ever tasted.

We weighed anchor next morning with scarcely two-thirds of our number on board, and thrice was the vessel compelled to lay-to, in order to enable the absentees to come up with her. I also learned that, during the night, the steward and two Frenchmen, his countrymen, who had joined our expedition, had deserted.

We continued our voyage without any event occurring worth recording, save the death of one of our companions, whose constitution had been shattered by excessive dissipation. On the 14th of February we came in sight of the promised land; and, though its hills were barren, we hailed them with joy, as the<sup>69</sup> harbingers of comfort and abundance in store for us, after the endurances of so many hardships and privations. But we were doomed to disappointment, for the wind suddenly changed; and soon coming on to blow a terrific gale, we were obliged gradually to take in every stitch of canvass, and finally to run before it under bare poles, at the rate of twelve knots an hour. Our little vessel gallantly breasted the huge seas, and rose on their foaming crests buoyant as a swan, then dipped into the yawning abyss of green waters beneath, to be presently tossed up in their mighty arms, high, high up, as a giant would fling up a feather to the winds. Her timbers creaked and groaned, and every rope strained at its work; the wind whistled through her cordage,



and buffeted the sails as they lay snugly clewed up in crabs, as if challenging them to a contest with it, now that it was in the pride of its fierce strength; still the taut little craft held on her course, yielding to the force of her potent master, but only biding her time to come off victorious. At last the gale lulled; 70 and fetching up under a favourable breeze, we reached Monterey on the morning of the 18th of February.

The bay on which this town is situated is large, extending north-east some eighteen or twenty miles, but, being shallow, does not afford much protection to vessels; indeed, the harbour itself is not more than a mile in length, and is formed of piles of rock and loose stone, jutting out into the sea. On entering the roadstead, every object appeared to me—it might be fancy—on the most diminutive scale, with the exception of the hills surrounding the town, which are lofty, and present a pleasing aspect. They are studded with pines, stunted oaks, and small shrubs; and though this was the end of the winter season, the vegetation appeared most flourishing. From this almost evergreen background the tiny, one-story houses stand out in bold relief, their whitewashed faces glistening in the sun, and deepening the verdure of the landscape.

These miniature habitations have three or 71 more apartments, connected with one another, the roof, common to all, projecting some four or five feet beyond the walls, and forming a kind of verandah. I likewise observed several log-houses, built by the Americans, as I justly concluded, the natives possessing no idea of this sort of edifice. To the extreme right, on the summit of a lofty hill, and on the top of a nondescript building which presented the appearance of a collection of palings and log-huts, heaped promiscuously together, but which I was informed was the fort, waved the flag of the United States.

The picture was completed by the presence of three vessels, riding lazily on the heaving bosom of the now calm sea: one of them a frigate, the Warren, condemned as unseaworthy; the second, a merchantman; and the third, a brigantine which had been taken from the Mexicans at the commencement of the war, for smuggling arms and ammunition. There were likewise several Indians, clad in dirty blankets, who by their gestures, as they stood on the beach, evidently regarded our 72 approach with no small degree of curiosity: they were as black as a coal.

We landed at the foot of an abrupt rock, on the top of which stood the Custom-house, a long, whitewashed building, of ancient date, and about twenty feet in length: our way to it lay along a pier of most unsafe appearance, and considerably so in reality, being constructed of a few logs thrown loosely across a series of half rotten posts sunk into the sand, and liable to be dislodged by the ebb and the flow of the tide. To our left, the beach was covered for miles with heaps, or rather hillocks, of sand, which in many places stretched as far into the interior as the eye could reach.

We remained several days on board, in consequence of no preparations having been made for our reception here, as it was expected we should land at San Francisco. However, we disembarked at last, and were received by a motley crowd, broken up into groups, evidently sharing in the excitement of the hour. The portly Californian, under his 73 ample-brimmed *sombrero* and gay *serapa*, the dark-skinned and half-clad Indian, and the Yankee, in his close European costume, intermingled or chatting apart in groups of threes and fours, imparted an irresistible charm of novelty to the scene, most grateful to us, who had been so long pent-up on board ship, and accustomed to see the same faces, day after day, for months.

“Faugh!” exclaimed O'reilly, pinching his nose as we came up to a long, low building, from which issued a smell the most unsavoury imaginable: “sure, it ain't fresh mate they're killing here.”

We learned that this was the slaughterhouse and hide store. The hides were stretched out to dry, and form the staple of traffic between the natives and the ships that frequent the port. We hurried past it, and were soon out of harm's way. We mustered at a convenient spot, not far off from the end, or beginning—I don't know which—of the principal street, and formed into platoons; and, as we had contrived to preserve our 74 uniforms very carefully, we elicited no small degree of admiration as we marched to our quarters, which were nothing more than some old Spanish barracks, in tolerable repair, and of the lath, plaster, and whitewash style of architecture.

We were received by about twenty or thirty volunteers—old hands, as they were called; and so they were, in more senses than one; but, as they seemed very glad of our coming, and provided us with

abundance of fresh beef, we had no reason for the moment to take exception to the results of their experience.

As soon as I was somewhat refreshed, I took advantage of an offer from one of the “old hands,” and proceeded to explore the town. By way of general description, I may say that the majority of the houses are built of *adobè*, (unburnt brick) without decent windows or doors, and many in a deplorable state of decay. The school-house, however, is a very fine building, constructed of square blocks of stone, and lofty, being two stories high, and containing three large rooms, one of which is

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75 not less than fifty feet in length, by twenty in breadth. It has a portico, and is surrounded by a handsome stone wall. It was built by an Irish volunteer, by trade a master-mason, and resident here, and who, having amassed a large fortune by some lucky speculations, bethought him that it was time to return to his wife, whom he had left at New York; in consequence of which resolution he abstained one morning from attending muster, and was not known to have taken leave of the prospective honours of the service until the vessel that conveyed him away was too far off for martial law to reach him. The projector of the building was the Reverend Waller Colton, the Alcalde, who raised the necessary funds partly by voluntary subscriptions from the townspeople, and partly by fines inflicted upon offenders against the law, and further promoted the philanthropic object by employing in its erection the culprits whom he condemned to the penalty of hard labour for terms varying in duration.

Our next visit was to the fort on the top of the hill. It is of wood, the magazine and 76 strongest places being constructed with logs, dovetailed together, and the whole surrounded by stakes. It reminded me very strongly of Robinson Crusoe's citadel. Lightly as I thought of it, however, I saw it was provided with some excellently mounted artillery, and there was abundance of ammunition; so that it would, doubtless, do its work well, if necessity required it.

On our way through the town in the evening, we went into one of the *fandangos*, or dancing-booths—if I may employ the term—where the motley population were enjoying themselves after a fashion

which induced me to procure a partner and join the “breakdown.” I merely mention this occurrence, on account of a very singular compliment which my *dark* partner paid me, in return, I suppose, for my gallantry; though, as we could not understand each other, and only laughed, she may have given me credit for more boldness than I really possessed. I had turned my head away for an instant, when smash came something upon my unfortunate 77 pate, and immediately after there fell over my shoulders a shower of fragments of an egg-shell, intermingled with a quantity of very minute gilt and coloured papers which had been substituted for its natural contents. I need not say that I was very well pleased at the substitution. Of course, I laughed immoderately, and subsequently learnt from my *cicerone* that this is the country-fashion, when a lady wishes to bestow upon her partner in the dance a signal mark of her approbation.

I observed that the ladies affected the European style, but wore their dresses fitted rather loosely to their figures; which, by the way, were uncompressed by whalebone; nor did I remark any artificial additions super-added to compensate for the parsimony of Nature. The gentlemen wore *calcineros*, or pantaloons, that button up from the ankle to the hip, but are generally worn open from the knee downwards. Red or blue sashes were bound round their waist, the tasselled ends of which are very long, being allowed to fall gracefully over the hip, where they are kept 78 in their place by a simple but ingenious contrivance.

As I have mentioned the *serapa*, it may be as well to describe it here. It is of cloth, of rich colour, and of the shape of an ordinary blanket, having a hole cut in the centre, parallel with the sides, and through which the head is passed. The Dons of California, however, do not wear them in this fashion, but, fixing one end on the right shoulder, cast the other gracefully over the left, allowing it to fall in natural and careless folds. At length, we returned to our quarters, where, in one large and comfortless room, were at least fifty men, sitting, crouching, and lying in every variety of posture, the principal number occupying the middle of the apartment in the dust, and dirt, and damp, with their heads on their knapsacks, describing a circle, of which the common centre was formed by an accumulation of feet. This they called a round bed. The muskets and side-arms, the military hats, belts, and cartridge-boxes, were disposed wherever there was a vacant spot, 79 and the whole scene was so uncomfortable to look at, that I regretted the rain prevented me from seeking repose under

the outer palisade. I procured a log, and sat down upon it; and, though there was a great uproar, I suppose I fell asleep at last, as I remember suddenly starting to my feet at the report of a pistol. A number of us rushed out in the direction of the sound, and, hastening over a wooden bridge, thrown across a ravine that traverses the centre of the town, found ourselves in the midst of a desperate fray engaged between about twenty Spaniards and some of the old volunteers, who had been assaulted by the former. These being very superior in number, were taking to flight, but, on perceiving us, gave a shout, and renewed the combat. Knives had been drawn on both sides, and some severe wounds inflicted; and I do not know how the affair might have terminated, had not O'reilly and Freünd come up armed with heavy stakes which they had wrenched from the bridge, and begun belabouring friend and foe with 80 more earnestness than discrimination, until they discovered their mistake, and confined their operations to the Spaniards, whom they compelled to retreat, breathing vows of vengeance. The quarrel had originated in a gambling-house, in consequence of one of the party, a Spaniard, being detected in the act of cheating an American, who resented the dishonesty by knocking him down. This man, it appears, was waylaid on his road home; but, seeing some of the Spanish party prowling about, he changed his itinerary, and made for another house, where he expected to find some of his companions. Fortune favoured him in this matter, and they were all returning together, when the natives suddenly fell upon them. The pistol we had heard went off accidentally in the scuffle without injuring any one. These scenes were of frequent occurrence, and were indeed so common, that no one heeded them.

I passed the remainder of the night most miserably, though, on the whole, we all managed to turn out pretty fresh at muster. After 81 parade we were induced, by the representations of the old volunteers, to discard our heavy military hats, and substitute a light cap, as being more suited to the climate. The old volunteers, I may remark, wore no uniform, but had adopted a costume partly Spanish, partly American; nothing but their weapons and their belts, except, perhaps, the dexterity with which they handled the former, denoting that they belonged to the military force.

As soon as I found myself again at liberty, I renewed my excursion into the town, my first visit being to the church, which stood near our quarters. It is a small edifice, strongly built, and of simple style; the only ornaments consisting of a few mouldings over the gothic porch, and on

each side of it a niche, intended to contain the statue of a saint. The walls in the interior are white-washed over, and were, when I saw them, extremely dingy and dirty. They are ornamented with paintings, very indifferent copies of celebrated originals: one of these represented the passion of Christ; another, the 82 temptation of St. Anthony. The latter was full of grotesque and grinning spectres, interspersed with females in a state of classic nudity, but whose blandishments I think it argued the best possible taste on St. Anthony's part to resist. I also noticed a very beautiful figure of the lifeless body of the Saviour, enclosed in a glass case; I was, however, not a little surprised at the barbarous taste that had directed the arrangement of the accessories. The figure lay on a stiff and ungraceful couch, formed of the richest and most costly stuffs, but so thick and modern in design as immediately to dissipate all those serious ideas which the real beauties of the work were calculated to inspire. It was just such an effect as might be produced by draping one of the old Greek models in satin and Brussels lace. But this was not the only incongruity observable. The virgin was represented in modern attire, with a bunch of artificial flowers in her hand, and the altar itself was decorated with all the primitive colours, without the slightest attempt at 83 blending or harmony. There was an organ-loft, but the only musical instrument that it contained was a huge drum, on which I found written in English, "This is the drum belonging to the Ontario, which made such a noise in the South Seas."

On attending service on the following Sunday, I must confess I was not a little startled at the character of the musical selections, with which the devotions of the congregation (almost exclusively composed of females) were enlivened. The instruments consisted of a guitar, a violin, and a flute; and, during the usual pauses in the ritual, we were alternately entertained with the piquant air of "Yankee Doodle," and the solemn national anthem of "Hail, Columbia." I could not but admire the inimitable self-possession of the French consul, whose features were screwed up into an absorbed and intense devotional expression, which, by the unnatural rigidity of the facial muscles, was evidently assumed to keep down the latent explosion that he had temporarily succeeded in smothering.

Surrounding the church are the remains of an extensive *adobe*, or mud building, which formerly served for the purposes of a mission. The scenery in the neighbourhood is of an exceedingly pleasing and even picturesque character. Close to the church, and running out in the direction of the bay, lies a large and beautiful sheet of water, shut in at one side by some steep but verdant hills, studded here and there with cottages. The road to San Francisco runs through a small valley, lying between these hills and the church; and the country, on either side, presented very much the aspect of the park scenery of England, with this exception, that the trees were, in general, of a more stunted character. The illusion was rendered more complete by the rich green by which the slopes were clothed, the winter being at its close, and the vegetable world refreshed by the copious rains that had fallen. The stunted appearance of the trees near the coast, and the inclination which they take from the sea, naturally lead to the conclusion that they are affected by continuous 85 and powerful winds from the north-east and south-east.

In strolling through the woods, I stumbled upon a small cemetery, intended, I presume, exclusively for foreigners, there being but few, if any, Spanish names inscribed upon the tombstones. Here lay the remains of a great many of the crew of the Columbus vessel of war; and a feeling of sadness stole over me when I reflected that, like those poor fellows, I might be destined to lay my bones in some sequestered and lonely nook like this, thousands of leagues distant from my family and friends. And yet for those who are epicures in such matters, no prettier spot could be found, the scenery around being of that pleasing and tranquil character which we love to associate with the memory of the dead.

In returning to the town by the San Francisco road, I encountered a yoke of oxen and waggon, of a most primitive and curious build. The wheels are generally formed of the hardest and toughest kind of wood, cut horizontally from the trunk of some immense tree, and 86 forming one solid piece, rarely, if ever, shod with iron, to prevent them wearing. The axle-tree, which is also of wood, is at least ten inches thick, the part on which the wheel rests being cut down and rounded to a diameter of about six. This is crossed by three heavy beams running parallel with the wheels, the centre beam extending a considerable distance beyond the main body of the conveyance. The beams are fastened

together by means of cross pieces, and by being partially sunk into the axle. Staves are then nailed perpendicularly all round, and strengthened by others laid horizontally upon them, so as to form the body of the carriage. The oxen are attached to the projecting beam already described, and which stretches as far as their heads, by means of a yoke composed of a heavy piece of wood, about six or eight inches in width, the edge being hollowed out at a convenient distance to receive the heads of the two animals. In yoking the oxen, this cumbrous headpiece is placed at the extremity of the neck, just behind the horns, to which 87 it is firmly tied by long strips of raw hide passed several times round. A strong rope is then fastened round the centre of the yoke, between the heads of the oxen, and the latter having been backed in, one at each side of the centre beam, the latter, heavy as it is, is raised up and tied to the yoke, the immense weight keeping down the heads of the oxen in a manner painful to witness. I have often been surprised at the prodigious strength of these animals; for, heavy of draught as are these conveyances, they can draw enormous loads in addition.

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## CHAPTER V.

Life in Monterey—A Californian café and its incidents—Yankee sharpness, *versus* tropical blood—The Indians of Monterey and Mount Carmel—*Agréments* of a promenade, with a canine accompaniment—Trade and agriculture—Education—Equestrian skill and equipments of a Californian cavalier—Mode of taming the wild horses and mules of the country—Feeling of the population towards the Americans—General Castro—Aristocratic distinctions—An old campaigning dodge—Arrival at San José—Siege of the old quartel—Departure for La Paz.

In the evening I strolled into Abrigo's, the principal, indeed, I believe, the only *café restaurant* in the town. Its pretensions in point of accommodation were of a very humble order, being limited to one tolerable sized, and two very small rooms, the latter of which were exclusively devoted to gambling. There were two billiard-tables, but, although well skilled in the European game, 89 and possessing a profound knowledge of all the angles of the table, the Californians seem in general to prefer a peculiar game of their own, which is played somewhat after the following fashion: ten wooden pins are set upright in the centre of the table, and with three balls, the spot, the white, and



the red, the player takes his chance of either upsetting a pin or holing a ball, either of which adds two to his score. If at one stroke he can manage to knock down the ten pins, he counts fifty; but such a *coup de main* as this is not of very frequent occurrence.

Shortly after I entered, an American gentleman, who had just arrived from Mazatlan, challenged one of the signors to play him for twenty-five dollars. The bet was accepted, and the money lost by the challenger. Upon this the latter appeared greatly chagrined, and said, as he was putting by his queue—

“If I had the money with me, I shouldn't mind playing you for five hundred dollars.”

“Don't let that be any obstacle,” said an old gentleman, who, it was subsequently 90 whispered, was some relative of the Yankee, “I will lend you the money.”

The Californian, deceived by the easiness of his previous victory, eagerly accepted the second wager, and the countrymen of the respective parties crowded into the room to watch the result. The American played at first with indifferent success, but with the most perfect command of his temper, while his adversary trembled with excitement, although, by his scornful manner, it was evident he felt confident of his own superiority. At last the critical point of the game was reached; and the American, who, it was apparent to most of us, was only amusing himself at the expense of his opponent, quietly took the cigar out of his mouth, and applying himself seriously to his work, bowled the whole fifty out without stopping.

The excitement of this little incident over, I went into the *monté*, or gambling-rooms, which were crowded with players. There was a pile of money in the centre of each table amounting to several hundred dollars, and 91 against the banks the bystanders were betting in sums varying from the value of a shilling up to fifty dollars. One of the players, a fine, handsome-looking Californian, had just been stripped of every dollar he possessed, and was making the round of the persons present, in order to try and borrow the means of again wooing the smiles of the fickle goddess. He was, however, too little known, and too reckless a player, to render this, at all times a difficult, on this

occasion, an easy task. No one appearing disposed to assist him, he handed round a blue cloak of the finest cloth, and offered it to the highest bidder.

On expressing my surprise to an American beside me that so gentlemanly and elegant-looking a man should thus demean himself before so many people, he burst into a horse laugh, and told me that it was evident that I was a new importation, for that such scenes were of every day occurrence. "In fact," continued he, "when I want to buy a horse, saddle, spurs, or even a *serapa*, I come here, 92 and as soon as I see a Spaniard thoroughly pigeoned, and eager to try his luck again, which is pretty generally the case, I go outside and take a squint at his beast and its trappings. After lounging about for a while, out comes the Don on his way home, railing against his ill fortune, and ready to sell his soul to the devil himself, for the means of repairing it. The tempter presents himself in the shape of your humble servant, and as I am about as good a hand at a bargain as the respectable old gentleman in question, I generally get what I want at less than a third of its value. A Californian gambler will sell everything he possesses, if you once get his dander up."

The Indians of Monterey and the neighbouring mission of Mount Carmel are the most hideous-looking creatures that it is possible to imagine. They are very dark, indeed I may almost say black, with a slight tinge of copper colour; the features are, in all other respects, as purely African in their cast, the nose being large and flat, the cheek-bones salient, the lips thick and wide, and the forehead as low as is 93 consistent with a faint supposition of the existence of a brain, to which their pretensions are miserably small. They have long flowing black hair, descending almost to the waist, and, like the Californians, the whitest and most regular teeth I have ever beheld. They are peculiarly filthy and licentious in their habits, and seem to have picked up nothing from their Spanish masters but their vices. In fine weather, they are continually to be seen in the streets of Monterey in a state of the most deplorable intoxication; fighting, gambling, and drinking, forming the sum total of their occupations.

At the time of my visit, they were quite a nuisance in the place; but, great as was the annoyance they occasioned, it was nothing compared to that experienced from the dogs that swarmed in the town and neighbourhood, and which reminded one forcibly of a Turkish village. Wherever you

went, you encountered them in large troops; and at night it was impossible to walk three steps without a fierce and snarling muzzle menacing you out of a doorway, as if you had been detected in the contemplation of a burglary. It required the exercise of some nerve, and a more intimate acquaintance with the peculiarities of these noisy animals, before I felt at all at ease as to their capacities for mischief. They are generally ill-shapen and ugly mongrels, fond of showing their teeth, but so cowardly, that one man with a good stick can put five hundred of them to flight. It is a rare thing to see a good dog in this part of the country, although several attempts have been made to introduce a superior breed.

Monterey, at the period of which I write, was considered the capital of California, but its trade was exceedingly limited, it being rare to see more than one vessel in the harbour until the arrival of the Americans. The shops bear no external evidence of their character, sign-boards being superfluities in a place where each man's *locale*, occupation, and circumstances, are as well known as in a gossiping country village. The articles most in demand, as is natural with a vain and showy people, are wearing apparel, personal ornaments, and firearms, more particularly the rifle, none of which the Californians manufacture themselves.

There is very little land under cultivation in the vicinity of Monterey, but still there is no lack of potatoes and other vegetables. That which strikes the foreigner most is the utter neglect in which the soil is left, and the indifference with which the most charming sites are regarded. In the hands of the English or Americans, Monterey would be a beautiful town, adorned with gardens and orchards, and surrounded by picturesque walks and drives. The natives are, however, unfortunately, too ignorant to appreciate, and too indolent even to attempt, such improvements.

Education is far from being general, even amongst the higher classes, it being considered quite an accomplishment to read and write. There are no schools, either Spanish or American: and it is therefore not to be wondered at that, in the absence of mental, the Californians should devote themselves to the physical exercises, in which they excel. As cavaliers, no nation can approach them in dexterity; the proficiency which they have attained in the management of the horse being really wonderful. Their movements are graceful in the extreme, though bordering on the theatrical;

but their love of display and effect is so continuously sustained by an apparently reckless daring, that, however superciliously the stranger may be disposed to regard them at first, he is soon lost in surprise and admiration. Everything connected with the accoutrements of the horse and his rider is calculated to confirm this impression on the mind of the spectator, an air of wild grandeur pervading the arrangements of both.

The *hoosti*, or saddle-tree, is made of wood, the pommel being crowned with a heavy knob, and covered with leather of a very strong description, and in color greatly resembling parchment. Both the pommel and hind part of the saddle are of extraordinary height, the former reaching above the rider's waist. The saddle-tree itself is covered over with two 97 pieces of leather from three to four feet square, the outer one stamped with beautifully figured designs, and, in many instances, enriched with handsome embroidery. They are slipped over the pommel and hinder part of the saddle, by means of slits cut in the leather, and form a very comfortable seat.

The stirrups are cut out of a solid piece of hard wood, about eight inches wide and three thick, with two holes, one for the foot and the other for the stirrup-leathers, which are unusually wide and strong. I have heard many Americans say that these stirrups are preferable to their own, being easier to catch while the horse is in full gallop, should they happen to slip off. The head-stall is usually of rich and fanciful design, and, in most instances, ornamented with chased silver; and a powerful bit, worked by an equally strong bridle, made of plaited horse-hair, serves to keep under subjection the most violent horse, as he must either yield to its control, or have his jaw broken by it. To the end of this bridle is attached a short, heavy whip of plaited leather, 98 with two cutting thongs; and round the pommel of the saddle, underneath the knob to which I have alluded, to obviate the danger of its slipping off, is coiled the *lasso*, a rope of the strongest fabric, and composed of the same materials as the bridle.

The costume of the rider generally consists of a glazed *sombrero*, with a leaf six or eight inches in width, and secured on the head by a string passing from the sides underneath the chin. His shoulders and body are protected by the *serapa*, and his limbs by *calcineros*, both of which garments I have already described. Round his waist he wears a red or blue sash, which serves the purpose of braces;

the freedom of his movements being inconsistent with that inconvenient auxiliary of European costume.

In person, the Californian *caballero* is generally tall and graceful, with jet black hair, having a slight tendency to curl, a brown complexion, expressive black eyes, and features decidedly Roman in their cast. When fully equipped, mounted, and inspired by the ardour

#### A WATERING PLACE—LOWER CALIFORNIA.

99 of the chase, I cannot conceive a more perfect type of manly beauty and chivalrous bearing.

Such is the force of example, that many of the Americans and other foreigners who had been residing a little time in the country, and who had had but little previous experience as equestrians, became admirable riders, in some instances but little inferior to the natives themselves. Our men became such enthusiasts on the subject, that they devoted the greater part of their pay to the purchase of horses and saddles.

The manner in which the wild horses of California are tamed is sufficiently curious to merit some description. A party of well mounted horsemen rides out in search of them; and, when they find a sufficient number of them together, they surround and chase them in a body into the *correl*, where the gate is purposely left open to receive them. Were they to attempt to chase them singly, or even in small numbers, they would find great difficulty in catching them; but, by driving them in large troops, they are the more willing to follow the direction given by their pursuers; and their movements embarrassing each other, escape is more difficult. The animals having been chased inside the fence, the *ranchero* selects the horse that pleases him most, and the lasso is thrown round his neck. He is then led or driven out of the *correl*, and, being thrown down, his legs are tied; a leathern blind is attached to the *hackamore* placed ready for that purpose on his forehead, and a strap fastened loosely round his body. The lasso is then tied to the *hackamore* immediately beneath the mouth, and he is thus completely secured. His legs are set free after this operation, but he is still held by the *lasso*. He now begins to kick and plunge furiously, but soon getting tired of this amusement, the person who holds the *lasso* draws it in gradually with a gentle strain until he can

reach the animal's head, which he pats as soothingly as possible. He then draws the blind down over his eyes, and jumps on his back, slipping his knees between the strap and the horse's sides. This operation is <sup>101</sup> generally performed by an Indian, who is accustomed to ride in this fashion without either saddle or blanket. The blind is now lifted, and the horse, unused to the burden that he bears, begins rearing and plunging again, and keeps it up sometimes for a whole hour. All this time the Indian is trying to guide him, but at first without success. At last the animal gets exhausted, and moves along with greater docility. The rider then takes him home, and, choosing a spot where there is sufficient grass, sinks a strong stake of wood in it, and, attaching the animal to it, leaves him alone for the remainder of that day. On the following, and, perhaps, for eight successive days, according to circumstances, he repeats the same operation; and then, if he considers him sufficiently broken in, puts on the saddle, his eyes being still kept covered. When the saddle is first put on, the trainer does not mount him, but allows him to kick and plunge about until he gets a little familiarized to it. He then rides the horse with a saddle for a few days, and puts on a bridle. <sup>102</sup> He is still led, however, by the *hackamore*, the object of putting on the bridle being merely to accustom him to it. In this way some horses may be tamed in a month, whilst others will take two or three. Others, again, can never be broken in sufficiently for any ordinary rider to mount them without danger. Of the wild horses subjected to this process of training, at least one fourth are killed, and a still larger proportion seriously injured.

The wild mules are still more difficult to break in; the mode of training is, however, pretty much the same, with this exception, that it is more violent and of longer duration.

Horses, mules, billiards, and *monté*, I found to be the all-engrossing subjects of conversation; and it was not without some little difficulty that I could obtain sufficient *data* to enable me to form a correct idea of the domestic habits of the better classes. It may be readily supposed that the Californians could not be very well affected towards those who had come, as it were, to conquer and appropriate their country; and the military <sup>103</sup> were, of course, particularly obnoxious. The garrison had long been apprehensive of an attack; and, shortly previous to my arrival, a report had reached Colonel Mason, that a body of men under General Castro, a gentleman of good family and great personal influence, was marching upon Monterey with hostile intentions. The Americans were

kept, night and day, under arms, and a severe conflict was anticipated. The General, however, came to the conclusion, that the attempt on Monterey would be unsuccessful, and wisely wrote to the American Governor to say, that, if the latter would ensure the safety of his person and property, he would abandon all further designs against him. He subsequently rode into the town, attended by only two or three persons; and, in an interview with Colonel Mason, expressed himself in such amicable and friendly terms, that the latter treated him with kindness and liberalilty, granting him all that he had demanded, and securing to him the full enjoyment of his personal liberty.

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The example given by General Castro was attended with a good effect upon others, and all idea of fighting was abandoned for the present. Still, however, there lurked in the breasts of the people a strong prejudice, which the conduct of the Americans themselves tended greatly to embitter. I have frequently seen a quiet and respectable party of the natives intruded upon by drunken soldiers or sailors, who, not content with observing or partaking of the festivities, to the enjoyment of which all strangers who conduct themselves properly are welcome by the usages of the country, insisted upon monopolizing the privileges of the fête, and otherwise outraging the feelings of the people. Up to the time of my visit, such had been, generally speaking, the conduct and character of the foreigners who had visited California; and it is not to be wondered at, that a people so isolated and so naturally courteous should have regarded the Americans and English somewhat in the light of savages. Owing to this feeling, which seemed to pervade the entire population, very 105 little opportunity was afforded me of forming a correct judgment of the real character and opinions of the upper classes. One fact, however, was sufficiently obvious, namely, that the old Spanish aristocratic distinctions are maintained with infinitely more rigour than in the parent country; the lines of demarcation between the descendant of the Castilian and the most civilized Indian being as broad and impassable as those existing between the planters of the southern states and their negro slaves. Yet there is nothing like slavery in the country, and both Spaniards and Indians live on the best understanding together.

Having alluded to General Castro's capitulation in terms that may possible lead to inferences unfavourable to his character, I think it but justice to add, that there is not the slightest ground for

supposing that it was dictated by any but the most honourable motives. This gentleman is the very beau ideal of the Spanish race—handsome and dignified in person, and as brave, hospitable, 106 and generous in character, as the hidalgo should be.

We had remained about twelve days in Monterey, during which time the ship *Isabella* had discharged part of her cargo, when our hopes of a little repose after our long voyage were suddenly disappointed by an order issued on parade, that, in consequence of the increasing disturbances in Lower California, companies C and D, with some sixty or eighty men from the detachment, were to embark on the 4th of March on board this vessel, and proceed to Lower California, to join the companies A and B, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Burton. At this time, we could ill be spared in Monterey, where the Americans still entertained apprehensions of a rising on the part of the population; but, as the demand for our presence in the lower country was pressing, the lesser necessity yielded to the greater. Some of the married men, who felt little disposition for active service, made strenuous efforts to obtain permission to remain, but the old Colonel knew his 107 duty too well to listen to their representations. Orders were, however, given that the women should be left behind, and that, during the absence of their husbands, they should be supported by the Government.

Captain N—, who had been for some time under arrest for various little military peccadilloes, such, for instance, as shooting some Indians without the necessary forms, was now liberated, and placed at the head of his company. His men would gladly have left him behind, but he was known to be an efficient officer, and the best disciplinarian in the force, having received a regular military education at West-Point. He was therefore considered well qualified to head the expedition, men of capacity being rare amongst us; and I have reason to think the old Governor was far from being displeased at getting rid of him.

We all embarked on the day appointed, and on getting on board, the lately arrived detachments were rather unpleasantly convinced that, if the members of company D were not very old, they were, at all events, 108 very experienced campaigners. Some of them, under pretence of looking after the baggage, had got into the vessel before us, and secured the most comfortable berths for



themselves, by going to bed in the afternoon, and affecting to sleep until we had taken up our respective quarters.

During our passage down, we underwent constant drilling, and attained great dexterity in the use of our arms. As D was a cavalry company, we were roused every morning from our slumbers by the sound of a bugle, which soon became as intolerable as the drum of the detachment. One morning, to our great contentment, the instrument was missing, and no one was sufficiently interested in its recovery to second the efforts of the Captain to discover the mode of its disappearance.

We coasted along until we arrived in the latitude of Santa Barbara, when the weather became exceedingly warm and agreeable on deck. About the 18th of March we reached the roadstead of San José, where we found at anchor the sloop of war *Ciane*, commanded 109 by Captain Dupont, which had put in to obtain a supply of fresh provisions. Here our Captain went on shore, to ascertain whether we should land at this point, or proceed to La Paz. We learned from the sailors who came on board that there had been a good deal of fighting, but that the town was then in the possession of the Americans.

It appeared that a handful of men, composed of about twenty-five marines and a few sailors and volunteers, had stood a severe siege in the old quartel, or barracks, having been surrounded for several weeks by a large body of the enemy. During this period, a number of the native women had taken refuge with the Americans, and the whole party had suffered incredible hardships. Most of the cattle had been driven from the neighbourhood of the town, and in order to prevent themselves from famishing, a portion of the little garrison was obliged to sally out, whenever an opportunity presented itself, to lasso and bring in a bullock, and, indeed, even to obtain a supply of water, the springs being at 110 some distance from the fort. These expeditions, although cautiously managed, were attended with great danger, the Californian sharp-shooters lurking under every available cover in the neighbourhood, in order to surprise and bring down the Americans.

On one occasion, a small party of the Yankees, about seven or eight in number, headed by Lieutenant Duncan, was completely surrounded by a large body of the enemy. It was proposed that

they should endeavour to cut their way through them, but the majority considered that it would be madness to think of it, and resolved on yielding themselves prisoners. They were immediately sent off into the interior of the country. Encouraged by this partial success, the Californians kept up the attack on the fort with great spirit, but made little or no progress. Lieutenant M'Clanahan, who stood at the base of the flag-staff, on the parapet of the fort, carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, jumped upon the rampart, and waved his sword in defiance. He was instantly struck 111 in the head by a ball, and fell back a corpse. There was only one really brave man amongst the natives—a Colonel, whose name I cannot at this moment call to mind, but which deserves to be remembered with honour. This gentleman determined to take the fort by storm, and accordingly made a desperate attack, in which he distinguished himself by his reckless bravery. At the very moment when his efforts seemed on the point of being crowned with success, he was killed by a musket-ball, and his death had such a dispiriting effect on his men, that they instantly beat a precipitate retreat.

The natives had now retired into their strongholds in the mountains, having lost a great number of their men, both by death and capture; and the first thing we heard on our arrival was, that they were preparing for a general and simultaneous attack. The crew of the *Ciane* having, in the mean time, come to the assistance of the garrison, the Americans considered themselves in full and permanent possession of the town. Our services 112 were therefore deemed of less importance here than in La Paz, a town of considerable importance at the other side of Cape St. Lucas, in the Gulf of California; and again embarking on board the *Isabella*, we reached the latter place on the 22nd March.

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## CHAPTER VI.

La Paz—A bivouac in a church—A change—“Black Jack”—Preparations for a march against the enemy—The march—Californian beds—Ranchés—A little story about “Black Jack.”

Paz is of great extent and beauty, and possesses a large number of rich pearl oyster beds, the pearl fishery having at one time supplied the chief article of traffic on this part of the coast. The Indians of La Paz are very expert divers, and were allowed a per-centage upon all the oysters they could fetch up from the beds; but, since the breaking out of the war, the fishery, and the trade which depended on it, had been, the one utterly neglected, and the other completely ruined, all the men capable of bearing arms having been impressed into the military service by Penada, the Mexican general. Judging from 114 the millions of oyster-shells I saw piled up on the beach, the trade must have been of no small importance.

The country around the bay of La Paz is elevated and picturesque, though rugged; the soil being composed principally of rock and sand, wildly and irregularly covered with the most prickly species of cacti, stunted bushes, and shrubs of sunburnt hue. The cocoa and the palm-tree rear their giant heads far above their forest brethren, amongst which they are abundantly interspersed, whilst here and there shoots up an enormous cactus, enhancing the novelty of the scene, and imparting to it quite an Oriental character. These were my first impressions of La Paz, as I gazed at it from the deck of our vessel, now slowly sailing into the harbour.

On the 22nd, we entered the town, marching up the principal street, which is very prettily and regularly built; on each side, at the outer edge of the *trottoirs*, were rows of green trees, whose overhanging foliage afforded us luxurious shelter from the intensely hot 115 rays of the sun. One of the houses I observed was completely dismantled. It had been of superior dimensions and architecture, and belonged to the Mexican Governor, but was pulled down by the natives during the recent fight, in consequence of his siding with the Americans. At the extreme end of the street was a stone wall, or parapet, constructed so as to form a seat, and extending almost across the thoroughfare; it also had gaps in it, to permit the passage of the inhabitants, and beyond it were the remains of a beautiful orchard.

Some of the houses were, as at Monterey, built of *adobè*, plastered over and whitewashed, with flat roofs of the same material, but surrounded by parapetted walls, which adapted them, in case of need, to the purpose of defence. Further on were numerous dilapidated dwellings, *adobè*, and

bamboo; devastated orchards; gardens trampled over and parched up for want of the husbandman's care; vegetables and fruit in abundance, trodden into rottenness; branches of trees broken and half burnt, 116 strewn about everywhere; whilst in places might be seen a black circle of charred embers, denoting where a fire had been kindled, and around which lay yet scattered the fragments of the last feast or orgie its blaze had enlivened.

The rude soldier, whether Californian or American, had spared nothing, however beautiful, whilst indulging in his reckless spirit of hatred and revenge. Nevertheless, judging of La Paz from what remained of it, it presented evidences of elegance and civilization to which Monterey was an utter stranger, and which I could attribute only to its greater proximity to Mexico, and to the consequent increased facilities of communication with that city. I confess, when I beheld the ravages war had made, that I regretted the Americans should ever have set foot upon the soil.

We were well received and entertained by the volunteers belonging to two other companies stationed here, whom we found very agreeable fellows, and remarkably spruce, a fact worth recording, because neatness is not 117 a characteristic of the American volunteer. Some of them accompanied me to the fort, which is situated on the brow of a hill. It is a good-sized building, with a large area in front, protected by mounds of earth and sand, on the outside of which are sunk, at regular distances of about ten feet, strong wooden stakes, supporting a heavy iron chain, forming a kind of breastwork.

There were several dirty tents scattered about, which had evidently seen some service; and additional accommodation for about thirty men had been contrived, by constructing by the side of one of the houses, a row of huts—apartments they were called—formed of sticks and brushwood. To the extreme left stood the Catholic church, which, having been stripped by the Californians of all its ornaments, was now converted into a barrack, to the right of which was the *correl*, or *cavallard*, where the government horses were kept. To this church I, with others of my company, were detailed; and accordingly we took up our quarters there in the evening, arranging our 118 boxes and knapsacks to serve us in lieu of beds.

I was fortunate enough to fall asleep, and to sleep soundly, in spite of the ribald merriment that made the walls of the church ring with peals of blasphemous laughter. I awoke much refreshed, and was able to attend muster in good time. Not so my companions, who presently came straggling into the ranks by twos and threes, some rubbing their eyes, some gaping and stretching, others again less than half-dressed, and more still in their fatigue dress, but all equally careless of discipline, chatting and laughing as they stood in the ranks, and in the same breath cursing the drummer and his drum, and the military service.

I have already shown, by narrating instances of open insubordination, that such irregularities as these were amongst the least serious evils of the American volunteer system, and I soon learned that they were developed on a far more extensive scale in Mexico than in California. Many of the companies held the authority of 119 their superiors and the regulations of the military service in utter contempt, alleging that the officers were men whom they had selected to command them in the field only, and who had no right to govern their actions, save in the hour of danger; whilst, as regarded the rules of military service, the volunteers were, by their very condition, not bound to conform to them. The disorganization and confusion resulting from such a state of things may be easily conceived; but it is doing the men the barest justice to add, that, when the hour came for action, they showed themselves worthy of their country, and, by their deeds of gallantry on numerous occasions, emulated, if they did not frequently outvie, the prowess of the regulars.

I found the inhabitants of La Paz more intelligent than the people of Monterey, whilst the habits of the lower classes were even more simple and primitive. The chief articles of food amongst the latter are beef, *tortillas*, and *penochè*. These *tortillas* are a kind of cake made of ground Indian corn, and the *penochè* 120 is a mixture of coarse flour and sugar, made up into very hard square or round pieces. I have frequently seen an Indian, or a Californian of the lower class, breakfast off a couple of these *tortillas*, weighing together not more than two ounces and a half, and a piece of this sugar and flour, previously to undergoing the most severe physical labour; to wit, the making of *adobès*, which are bricks of wet clay that he must first dig out of the pit before moulding them into the requisite form, generally an oblong, measuring two feet by eighteen inches, the last process

being to stack them so as to permit of their being thoroughly dried in the burning sun. The condition of the labouring classes in the lower country is indeed deplorable. They perform an amount of labour which, in such a climate, no white man could accomplish, and their wages are far from commensurate to such toil. The Indians of this region are better looking and more intelligent than their brethren of the upper country, their complexion not being quite so dark, nor their features so coarse.

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The day after my arrival, I ascertained that I and other of my companions were enrolled in another company, commanded by the officer before-mentioned, whose severity had gained him the nickname of “Black Jack,” and that we were to hold ourselves in readiness to set out, in the course of a few days more, on an expedition against the enemy. In consequence of this change, I shifted my quarters to a large house in the principal street, nearly opposite the one I have alluded to as having formed the residence of the former Governor. The bustle incidental to the announcement of a march into the interior can scarcely be realized through the medium of description. First, there was a general rush everywhere in search of canteens, knapsacks, saddles, bridles, spurs, thongs of leather, scraps of rope, pieces of raw hide, nails, and anything and everything that might possibly or impossibly come into use for the equipment of man, horse, mule, or other beast, which, in default of the two latter, would have to do their service. Then there was scuffling, and shuffling, and pushing, and swearing, and 122 laughing, and talking, and singing, and whistling—ay, and dancing, or capering about, less in joy than in excitement; and packing, and unpacking, and re-packing; stitching, and darning, and cobbling; a running from house to house of officers and men, all intermingling and jostling, and a prying into every corner, crook, cranny, and crevice; rummaging of cupboards and chests of drawers; upsetting of trunks and boxes; peeping under bedsteads and into beds; poking into dusty lumber-closets, and exploring of the most singular places; all this to hunt up necessities to which we had not the smallest right, and which the natives most unwillingly surrendered to us, in spite of written engagements on our part to return the same— *when we came back* —or give an equivalent in money. But, notwithstanding our exertions, we came off most miserably, though we ransacked every *ranché* throughout the neighbourhood. We were obliged

to make the best of what we had, and prepared ourselves for the start accordingly, being the most poorly equipped detachment that had 123 for many years set out on any military expedition.

We learned that the enemy were quartered in great numbers at Todos Santos, preparing for a descent upon La Paz and San José, a project which our Colonel resolved to frustrate by anticipating their attack and scattering their forces. About eleven on the night of the third day after our arrival, our company received orders to march, and proceeded to the parade-ground of the fort, where we were joined by about a hundred and twenty more men from two other companies, the remainder being left to guard the town against surprise. We soon formed into marching order, those in front being mounted on horses or mules, and those in the rear following on foot. I pitied them much as we proceeded.

It was a glorious moonlight night, and the men's weapons glittered like streaks of silver flashing through the deep foliage of the tangled brushwood through which we had to force our way. At first we got on tolerably well, in spite of the hillocks of sand, over which we either 124 stumbled or sunk into knee-deep; of rocky eminences which we clambered with considerable difficulty; and of prickly bushes and plants, which, shooting up in every direction, sorely annoyed the horsemen, but severely punished the unlucky pedestrians, inflicting the severest scratches on their hands and faces, and lacerating their feet even through their shoes. O'reilly vowed that the road "led direct to purgatory;" an opinion in which, notwithstanding the diversity of our religious opinions, the majority of us were disposed to coincide.

We had long left the town behind us, and our rapid march had brought us to one of those roads peculiar to California, and the advantages of which I have never been able to appreciate. They are just wide enough to allow of one horseman to advance, but not to permit of his wheeling round, unless by an exercise of ingenuity which it is not so certain that his horse or his mule will always be disposed to second. Along this road, then, we continued our march in single or Indian file, our native guides 125 warning us of any obstruction that existed in the shape of a huge limb of a tree, or awkward drift of sand. Towards morning, we halted at a convenient opening, and threw ourselves upon the ground, to snatch a few minutes' repose.

“Holy St. Anthony, what's that?” exclaimed O'reilly, jumping to his feet, and scratching the nether part of his person; “as sure as you live, boys, we have got amongst old acquaintances.”

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before a general manifestation of similar discomfort burst from all who had, on the first impulse, cast themselves on the ground. We soon discovered that such portions of our persons as had touched the soil were literally stuck full of a species of prickly-nut, the produce of a kind of cactus, with which it was covered. We experienced some difficulty in disengaging ourselves from these most unpleasant attachments, but, having done so, and cleared a convenient space, we again threw ourselves down, and, in spite of the intolerable 126 pain we were suffering from the punctures we had received, endeavoured to close our eyes.

But our troubles had only commenced; for we soon discovered that the soil teemed with a numerous family of vermin, so anxious to be on terms of the most intimate acquaintanceship with us, that rest was impossible. Fleas of so large a growth, and of so voracious a propensity, I never again wish to see, much less to feel; whilst the ants and wood-bugs were of a development quite startling, the odour of the latter being on a corresponding scale. It was a relief to hear the word “march” given. We resumed our journey with more alacrity than we had commenced it, and proceeded until we had accomplished about twenty-five miles, when, it being broad day, and a *ranché*, or farm-house at hand, we again halted.

This *ranché* consisted of a small shanty, constructed partly of sticks, partly of leaves, and partly of the bamboo-cane, and looked like a mere speck, it being situated on the summit of a rugged and frowning steep of some sixty feet in height, composed of rock and 127 clay. Beneath it was a sandy flat of considerable extent, which seemed, indeed, to be only an enlarged continuation of our route. On the other side of this flat lay a series of sandy hills and valleys, adorned with the most splendid and enormous cacti, some of which must have exceeded thirty feet in height, growing perpendicularly on long and immensely thick stalks, the leaves—if leaves they can be called—of unwieldy bulk, but otherwise devoid of the characteristic eccentricities of this tribe of plants. In



the total absence of vegetation in this part, these prickly cacti offered great relief to the eye, and harmonized well with the general character of the scenery.

We halted at the base of the steep, and, looking up, saw some females, evidently watching our movements with some anxiety. One of our men soon discovered the ascent, and, clambering to the summit, informed the women what we wanted, at the same time giving earnest of a readiness to pay for it. Their application was successful; and, on their 128 return, myself and one or two others followed them down the declivities on the road-side, turning in and out of the rocks, until we reached a small valley, completely sheltered from cursory observation, where the live stock was grazing off a patch of meagre herbage, which, from its being, with the exception of a few trees, almost the only bit of green we could see—for we were now surrounded by barren hills—was quite refreshing to the wearied eye. From the fissures of the rocks there flowed, with a gentle ripple, a thin, limpid stream, which, falling into a hollow at the end of this little valley, there formed a small pond where the cattle could slake their thirst. It was, most probably, in consequence of there being here a few scanty patches of herbage and a supply of water convenient, that the people to whom the *ranché*; belonged had been induced to settle here; for none but those who have travelled through this wilderness of a region can appreciate the value of a little grass to sustain a few animals, and of a rill of water to irrigate a kitchen-garden.

#### MOUNTAIN SCENERY—LOWER CALIFORNIA.

129 Out of their stock of cattle we chose a cow, which was immediately driven up the sides of the hill to the flat upon which our party had halted, and there lassoed and shot. The carcass was forthwith stripped of its hide, and divided into quarters, one of which was allotted to every fourth of our number. Fires of dry sticks and brushwood were soon kindled, bowie-knives drawn, and, every man helping himself to his share, in turn became his own cook.

The “Californian gridiron” now came into active and general use. It is a straight stick cut from a tree, stripped of its bark, and whittled to a sharp point. Several pieces of beef are “speared” upon this; and, whilst one point rests on a piece of wood yet unburnt, and is held by one of the cooks, another turns the meat until the slices are done. Several of our men made the ramrod of their musket

serve the same purpose, and subsequently got a reprimand from our commander, Black Jack, in consequence of their being unable to clean and brighten it up again; the 130 operation cost them many an hour's hard labour, as I well remember.

Having again incidentally alluded to "Black Jack," I may as well here narrate a painful episode which was related to us, as we sat eating our food, by one of the volunteers who had been a long time in his company, and who had come with us from Monterey. He was one of the parties concerned in the expedition I am about to refer to, and which will illustrate the summary vengeance with which, when they are suspected of any offence, the poor Indians are visited, without formality of trial or proof of guilt. As nearly as I can remember, I give the substance of our comrade's narrative.

Whilst his company was staying at Monterey, some horses were stolen from the *cavallard*; and suspicion falling on some Indians whose tribe dwelt in the vicinity, a detachment of men was ordered to go in search of the stolen property, and, at the same time, to survey the country, and suppress any attempt at a rising amongst the natives. During this 131 excursion, which proved unsuccessful with regard to the recovery of the lost property, of which no trace could be found, one of the men lost the track, and was not again heard of alive. As desertion was out of the question, it was conjectured he had fallen a prey to the out-lying Indians, in revenge for the invasion of their country; and, on their return to Monterey with this unfortunate intelligence, they received instructions to go out again in search of him. This time, "Black Jack" was of the party. As they were upon the point of setting out, a runner brought news of the missing man. His body had been found cut to pieces, and several arrows sticking in different parts of it. The object of the expedition was now changed: vengeance was the word, and "Black Jack" vowed he would have it. After many days and nights of travelling through regions the most difficult of access, they came upon a party of Indians in the gorges of the lofty mountains of that district; but they denied all knowledge both of the horses and of the murdered man, hinting, 132 however, that in such a direction some news might be gained from another tribe of Indians, their enemies, and who were most likely to have committed the robbery and the murder. Accordingly their guide and interpreter started off again in the direction indicated; and, in the course of a few days more, the party came up with the

Indians, of whom it was in search. On the approach of the strangers, the chiefs advanced and shook hands with the Captain, who returned the compliment, and then informed them of the object of his visit. The chiefs protested they knew nothing about the transaction; it was the first time they had heard it mentioned; they were friendly to the foreigners, whom they feared, and did not wish to offend. “Black Jack,” tired of wandering about, told them he did not believe them; they were all of the same colour, and, therefore, all thieves and murderers alike; and he should insist upon the culprits being given up. Again the chiefs remonstrated and protested against the injustice that had been done them; it was in vain: for the Captain commanded some of the men to take the chiefs into custody. The men hesitated; when one of them, an Irishman, who had long served in the British army, stepped forward and seized the oldest chief, pinning his arms behind him, and the next moment the other was in a similar position. The party was sufficiently numerous to overawe the Indians, and, besides this, well armed; the Indians saw that resistance would be useless, and stood calmly awaiting the result. “Black Jack” pointed to a small space that had been recently cleared, and a firing-party took up its position there. The older chief, perceiving that his time was come, requested permission to speak with his son, who was standing near, and who now advanced. The two took leave of each other with great emotion; and the old man, after embracing his son, said to him—“My son, remember, that from this hour there is blood between us and the pale-faces;” which, as the interpreter informed the party, was equal to an injunction upon the tribe to revenge his death. The two chiefs then folded their arms, and deliberately stalked to the place of execution—of murder, rather—exhibiting the greatest unconcern, whilst the few men of the tribe looked on in the same impassive manner. In less than another minute all was over, and the two chiefs lay stretched on the ground stone dead; but, scarcely had they fallen, than the remainder of the Indians uttered a loud and terrific yell; and, plunging into the bush, disappeared in search of their companions. The party now began their retreat with great rapidity, but were severely harassed on their way by the Indians, who, assembling in great numbers, waylaid them at every turn, casting showers of arrows amongst them, and otherwise assailing them, though without effect; their dread of the muskets keeping them beyond the range of their own weapons. Several volleys were discharged amongst the assailants, but, whether with effect or not, could not be ascertained. At length the party reached Monterey without having sustained any loss; but this circumstance excited great dissatisfaction

amongst all who heard of it, as it was considered that the Captain had acted most unjustly; and when, in the course of the war, single parties were waylaid and cut off in detail, he was always regarded as the cause of the catastrophe, which was attributed to the unslumbering spirit of revenge which the massacre of the two chiefs had aroused amongst the Indian tribes.

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## CHAPTER VII.

Domestic economy of the Californians—The march resumed—Our animals—An important capture—San Antonio—The Yakee Indians—A mistake—My misfortune—Comforts of a blood-horse—Dr. Freünd's adventure—Todos Santos and the enemy.

To return to our repast. I had occasion to revisit the *ranché* in search of salt, and, taking advantage of the opportunity, made acquaintance with several ingenious native contrivances adapted to the exigencies of their domestic economy. To preserve that scarce article, water, cool and clean, a great desideratum in a torrid climate, and in a country abounding with vermin, and the atmosphere of which is charged with minute particles of sand, the natives select from a tree a branch having three forks, the ends of which they 137 trim to the convenient length, and, fastening the trimmed branch horizontally to a stout upright cane, slip into this triangular basket the brown clay pitcher containing the water reserved for culinary purposes, the top of which they cover with a piece of wood fitted to it. The whole apparatus is usually placed beneath the overhanging foliage of a tree, or under the shade of a projecting crag. The drinking-cups, or bowls, are formed of the shell or husk of a yellow tropical fruit, scooped out and carefully scraped. The cooking utensils are made of clay, and are of all dimensions. The Indian corn for making their *tortillas* is ground under a flat stone of about eight inches long by three broad, this being worked upon a stone table, averaging in length some eighteen inches by twelve in breadth, and standing upon four stone legs, the hindermost being quite two inches higher than the foremost; so that the surface of the table forms a pretty steep inclined plane, and facilitates the process of grinding, as well as that of separating, the bran from the flour. I 138 observed several raw hides stretched upon the ground, shaded by a screen of bamboo-cane and leaves; on these the natives indulge in their *siesta*. I also noticed a number of long switches,

similarly protected, on which were suspended as many strips of beef as they could hold. When this beef is thoroughly salted and dried, it will keep for a very considerable time, and is admirably adapted for the long journeys which the traveller is frequently obliged to take between one *ranché* and another, when to procure fresh meat is impossible.

I must confess, our party cut a very singular figure as it set out, after resting at this spot. We had all sorts of costumes; some military, some Californian; some wearing a hybrid between the two; others habited after a fashion more decidedly brigandish than anything else; but the majority of us appearing much the worse for our rough journey through the thorns, whilst many were literally in rags; some had thrust the lower portion of their trowsers into their boots, affecting a dashing style as they rode off upon their steeds—sorry

#### SPECIMEN OF BAMBOO HOUSES IN GENERAL USE IN LOWER CALIFORNIA.

139 beasts enough for the most part, though others were sleek and in good condition. As for caparisonings, fortunate were those who had succeeded in procuring decent saddles; many had bare saddle-trees, which they had brought in the hope of procuring, by some lucky chance, the necessary covering of leather from the *ranchés*; others rode on a couple of blankets, fastened on their steeds by means of a raw hide-rope passed round their bodies. The contrivances for stirrups were of the most extraordinary kind, and far too numerous and complicated for me to attempt any description of them. To say the truth, we looked like a desperate band of brigands, who had been a long time out on an unsuccessful expedition, and were now prepared for any murderous enterprise that promised well.

Our way lay through the narrowest paths, having on each side thick and thorny bushes, which scratched our faces, and pierced our hands cruelly, whilst the rocks and sands beneath our feet rendered our progress still more painful. Then we had to encounter entangled branches 140 of trees, whose tiny sprigs had become interlaced, and now formed a complete barrier, which we sometimes experienced the greatest difficulty in overcoming; or sometimes a huge limb would thrust itself across our path, so as to endanger the head or the face of the foremost rider, who, coming suddenly upon it, would sink down on the pommel of his saddle, to avoid a fearful concussion. Emerging

from these labyrinths, we would find ourselves upon a long and narrow valley, not exceeding fifty feet in width, covered with loose and deep sand, and frowned upon from both sides by gloomy rocks, which seemed to reach the sky. Travelling, indeed, in this region, under an insufferably hot sun, and over such roads, is the very climax of misery, and loud and frequent were the maledictions invoked upon it, and everything connected with the expedition.

As we threaded our way up and through one of those intricate steep defiles peculiar to mountainous districts, where the rocks around us appeared to have been thrown up and heaped together by some fearful

#### SKETCH DURING THE WAR—LOWER CALIFORNIA.

141 convulsion of nature, I could not but admire the steadiness and sagacity of the mules on which some of our party were mounted. Whilst our horses slipped and stumbled at almost every second step, the sure-footed Californian mules picked their way up the steepest ascents, down the most precipitous declivities, and along the most dangerous ledges, with a certainty and an instinct far beyond the calculations of human foresight. Their powers of endurance, too, far surpassed those of the strongest horses, to which, as beasts of burden or draught, they were also vastly superior; added to this, their hardy nature and hardier habits rendered them better able to support privation; they seemed to enjoy a meal off brambles, the bark of trees, or dried leaves, as much as a feed of corn, or the dried grass of the Indian wheat, whilst the horses would turn from the former with disgust.

We continued our road across the mountains, winding round them, in and out, and along narrow shelves of rocks, from which a single false step would have 142 precipitated him who made it into the deep valley far beneath; never resting but for a few minutes at a time, except at intervals or relays, averaging about twenty-five miles each, when we usually came up to a *ranché*, and refreshed ourselves with fresh meat, and sometimes vegetables and fruit. These *ranchés* generally occupied some picturesque spot, and the sight of them infused new life into the whole party, man and beast; the latter especially, whose instinct seemed to be even superior to the intelligence of our guide, the animals being always first to give us due intimation that we were approaching quarters, by pricking up their ears, pawing and snorting, and increasing their pace. Many of these *ranchés* were built

of *adobè*, plastered over and whitewashed, and had good *cavallards*, and well-cultivated gardens, irrigated with much ingenuity. Indeed, it was impossible to contemplate them, contrasting as they did so singularly with the wild scenery around, without astonishment and even admiration at the enterprise which had erected, in regions 143 so repulsive and ungrateful, these domestic memorials of a tolerably advanced civilization.

We had arrived within about seven miles of San Antonio, at one of the most miserable *ranchés* we had yet seen, when the word was passed to halt; whilst our colonel, with a party of twenty-five men, pushed forward to reconnoitre. They returned in the course of a couple of hours, bringing us intelligence of their having surprised and taken prisoner the Mexican General Penada, one of the chief promoters of the war, who had lingered in the town in consequence of a desperate wound received in one of his hands, during a violent quarrel, followed by a personal rencounter with one of the De Castro family, and a colonel in the Mexican service.

Having resumed our march, and reached the town, we took up our quarters at the lower end of the principal square. We had captured, on our way, three Yakee Indians, who were endeavouring to escape by one of the cross-roads; they were confined in the 144 guard-house, and a sentry stationed to keep watch over them.

These Yakees of California formed a large portion of a very numerous tribe of Indians in Mexico, who, attracted—as we were informed—by the prospect of plunder, and by the liberal promises held out to them by the Californians at the commencement of the war, had crossed the head of the gulf, and joined the native forces. They are a fierce, dark-complexioned race, though some shades lighter than the Indians of the upper country, to whom they are superior in natural intelligence. Their eyebrows and hair are very black, and the latter hangs in disorder about their head, though it is not permitted to grow to any great length, as is the custom with many other Indian tribes, nor do I believe is it often subjected to the process of combing. Their cheek-bones are high, their nostrils flat and wide, and their mouths large, but amply furnished with brilliantly white teeth. Their physical strength is immense; and, notwithstanding that they are not at all partial to 145 work—in which respect I do not think they differ very much from the labouring classes of more civilized countries

—the amount of fatigue and labour they can endure and accomplish is surprising. Their dress is of course adapted to the climate, and is of the lightest description, but not remarkable for cleanliness; a fact I believe to be as much owing to taste as to poverty. I was informed—though I do not vouch for the accuracy of the information—that thus far their conduct in the war had been barbarous in the extreme, for they had proved alike faithless to their new friends, and ungenerous to their enemies: indeed, the *ranchèros* have frequently declared that they dwelt not less in dread of their Indian allies than of the Americans; the outrages and the violence of the latter being, of the two, perhaps more endurable than the depredations of the former. I have smiled on such occasions, for I passed, of course, for an American, and the equivocal compliment was a little on our side. I cannot help thinking, however, that treachery and double-dealing 146 are not exclusively characteristic of the Indians, for experience has shown us that until the civilized man came into contact with the red-skins, such vices were only practised amongst them in warfare, when circumvention became a virtue; the pale-face taught the Red Indian how to cheat, by first cheating him, and now he taunts him because he has profited by the lesson.

There is in the neighbourhood of San Antonio a silver mine, which has been long but unprofitably worked, affording neither fair returns for capital expended, nor high wages to those employed. I noticed at the bottom of the streams, and in the fissures of the rocks, numerous minute particles of a metal resembling gold, for which it has often been mistaken; and these deposits frequently came under my observation during our journey.

San Antonio is very solidly built, the walls being of *adobe*, or clay, about two feet in thickness, and the houses roofed with red tiles, no house consisting of more than the ground-floor, which is a mode of construction 147 very common, indeed, most general, in this and other parts of the country. In the centre of the town is a square of about one hundred and fifty feet in width, to the left of which is a spacious basin of stone, coated with a kind of cement, and which is used as a bath and for washing clothes.

I enjoyed a good night's rest in this town, my couch being an old billiard-table, which had been left behind in the house I was quartered in. Next morning I found that a foraging party had succeeded,



in the course of the previous evening, in seizing a number of fresh horses and mules, one of which latter animals, well saddled and bridled, I procured for my own use, after a considerable clamour. I soon had occasion to congratulate myself on my good luck, for when we came presently to the wild and rugged country, instead of lagging in the rear of the party, I managed to keep pace with the foremost.

One morning, we were near committing a mistake, which might have occasioned the loss of several lives, had we not discovered our 148 error just in time to prevent a volley from being fired into an advancing body of men, whom we believed to be Yakee Indians, but who turned out to be twelve Californian *rancheros*, well mounted, and armed to the very teeth, with rifles, carbines, and pistols. At the nick of time, one of them held out a white handkerchief, tied to the muzzle of his piece; the result was a parley, when we discovered that they purposed to join our party, being disgusted and dispirited, as well as impoverished, by the losses they had sustained from the Yakees and the Mexican soldiers. At least, this was the tale they told us. They were tall, fine-looking men, of handsome mien and carriage, and we found in them most useful auxiliaries, as their knowledge of the country was superior in every respect to ours, notwithstanding that we had good guides.

A sad mischance happened to me one night, during a halt we made. My good mule, with his well-padded saddle and new bridle, was stolen from me, in spite of the sharp look-out 149 I fancied I kept. I strongly suspected some Spaniards of our party, whose particular duty it was to attend to the *cavallard*, and to the animals whilst they were grazing. They had the reputation of being very expert at horse-stealing; nor have I the least inclination to detract from it. Their practice was to allow the horses and mules to wander away in search of better pasture, as they alleged; and having got them to a suitable spot, and selected those they wanted—never the worst—they would drive them over some hill into a place known only to themselves, where they or their companions and accomplices could light upon them at the convenient moment.

In this way we lost several excellent cattle, both horses and mules. For my own part, to my great annoyance, I was obliged to content myself with a lanky grey horse, which seemed in the last stage of consumption; his back-bone was sharp as a razor, and I had nothing but a blanket in guise of

saddle, and for stirrups two long straps of raw hide. I was assured, however, that my Rosinante 150 was of first-rate blood, on the strength of which illusion I mounted him, and, consoling myself with it as well as I could, jogged on very uncomfortably, contriving never to quite lose sight of my better mounted companions.

In this manner I accomplished fifty miles, or more, and I ought to speak kindly of the poor beast that carried me, though it was at his own pace. I had not the heart to use switch or spur, when I looked at his spiritless eye, and glanced at his bare ribs, which poked almost through his skin, and showed like so many staves of a barrel. I am sure, if he suffered as much in carrying me as I did in riding him, it was lucky for both that his pace was not what might have been called “fast,” for a trot must inevitably have shaken him to pieces, and sawn my unfortunate body in two: it was awful to contemplate what even a moderately quick walk actually did. The pilgrim's purgatory of peas in one's shoes must have been Paradise itself, compared to this slow and excruciating mode of 151 progression. I am bound, however, to do the poor animal the justice to say, that if he did not go well, it was not his fault, and that he would have done so, had he been able. He did his best, and beast or man can do no more.

As we approached Todos Santos, I stopped to arrange the girth of my blanket, which had become loose, when I observed Doctor Freünd, the German whom I have already mentioned, sitting on a mound of earth by the road-side, holding his huge portmanteau on his knees, and with a countenance expressive of the deepest misery. I saw in a moment what was the matter; but to load my beast with the Doctor's portmanteau, which was crammed to bursting with all sorts of medicines, would have been reducing myself to the same miserable plight. We were, I believed, the only two left in the rear, and there was no alternative but to leave him where he was for a time, as at our next halt it would be easy for one of the best mounted to retrace his steps, and assist the Doctor out of his difficulties. Accordingly, after hinting my intentions, 152 I resumed my journey, but had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile before he overtook me, mounted on a well saddled horse, and leading another by the *hackamore*. I had not recovered from my astonishment, when another laggard came galloping up to us, shouting and laughing, as if in an ecstasy of merriment—

“Capital! capital! Ha, ha, ha! What fun! Bravely done, Doctor, and very sensibly.”

I became very anxious to learn what the Doctor had done; and our comrade was too full of the subject to delay gratifying my curiosity.

“I stopped behind awhile to rest,” resumed he, “with some more of our fellows, who are getting very tired; and, as I was fetching up again, just as I came to the little path that turns off the road a little way back, who should I see but the Doctor, with a six-barrel revolver in each hand, pointed at the heads of two well-mounted but unarmed Spaniards; for they only had knives, which were of no use against such arguments as the Doctor's. I was quite near enough to hear their conversation.

“‘Your horses or your *lives*,’ cried the Doctor.

“‘No *entendemos, señor*,’ said the Spaniards, both in a breath.

“‘You don't, don't you?’ cried the Doctor, again; ‘perhabs you *saben que ser caballos*?’

“‘*Si, señor*.’

“‘Do you *saben* bistol *tambien*?’ asked the Doctor.

“‘*Si, señor*,’ said one of them, who shook like a leaf.

“‘Vell, den, d—n you,’ said the Doctor, ‘*quieren ustedes soltar sus caballos*, or I break your hets; dat is, I mean, *romper* your d—n *cabezas* wit *estas* bistols. You *saben* dat, eh?’

“‘*Si, señor, si*,’ answered the Spaniards; and they jumped off their horses in a twinkling; and I can tell you the Doctor lost no time in mounting the nearest of them. Ha, ha, ha! Excellent, wasn't it?”

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I laughed heartily enough at the recital of this curious adventure, which the Doctor wound up by saying—

“I haf a fery pig knapsack, fitch is fery heffy, and fitch I must pring wit me. Ven I cot horse, I no care a pig d—n how I ket him.”

At last, after many days and nights of weary marching, we came to a wide plain, all sand, and stones, and prickly bushes, but the path across which was so narrow as to oblige us to take to the Indian file again; and a pretty long string we made, being not less than two hundred and twenty in number. However, in spite of the intense heat and dust, and of the burning thirst that devoured us, we pushed on in tolerable spirits, for we now began to distinguish the heights on which the town of Todos Santos is situated, and from which we were separated only by the plain we were now crossing. As we drew nearer, we plainly discerned the enemy dotted about on convenient elevations, and a loud shout burst from all—men, horses, mules, suddenly, as if by some preconcerted arrangement, dashing on with renewed energy, heedless of every obstacle, and eager only, as it seemed, to have “a brush” with the foe.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

A brush with the enemy—A narrow escape—O'reilly's prowess—An awkward fix—A repast on sugar-canes—The last of my blood-horse—Lost and found—La Paz again—Old acquaintances—Black Jack does more murder—Women of La Paz—Departure for San José.

The main body of the enemy, about four hundred in number, lay posted on the summit of a hill, beyond musket-shot, and apparently extremely well mounted and armed. As we drew nearer, they waved their flags by way of defiance, and commenced a dropping fire, which however did us no injury, although it served to animate our courage. Presently we commenced the ascent of the rugged steep on which they were so advantageously posted, when the firing became more sustained, and was returned by us with great spirit and with fatal effect. All at once we were saluted with a discharge of musketry from the borders of 157 a dense forest of brushwood and cacti, stretching from the foot of the heights along the right side of the plain we had so recently cleared, and in which this ambuscade had been prepared for us; into this part of the forest the party I belonged

to was ordered to plunge, and charge the enemy at the point of the bayonet; an order we executed with the rapidity of lightning, succeeding, after some hard fighting, in which a great number of Californians and Yakees were killed, in dislodging these sharpshooters, whom we pursued with great spirit. In this “brush” we lost several men.

Our little party consisted of about fifty volunteers, who at once pushed into the jungle, but vainly sought a trace of the enemy. As we found it impossible to advance in a body, we broke up into fives and sixes; having come to an understanding that we would afford one another mutual support, and direct our steps by the report of the guns. We soon lost sight of each other in our attempts to clear ourselves a passage through the brambles, and thorn, and underwood, suffering severely from 158 the lacerations they inflicted upon us: indeed, so great was our difficulty, and so embarrassed were we—at least I judge from my own personal experience—that if the enemy had only taken advantage of this natural defence, their ambuscade would have proved fatal to us, for we might easily have been cut off in detail to a single man. But the enemy did not make his appearance; and I was even expressing my astonishment at this circumstance, in a kind of soliloquy, mixing it up with conjectures as to whether I should ever succeed in getting out of this abominable labyrinth of cross-branches, when I heard myself called by name, and soon recognised the voice of O'reilly, though I could not make out whence it proceeded. “Look out, look out!” shouted he; “the blood-thirsty devil has you under cover.”

I was so bewildered by the suddenness of this intimation, that it is a matter of astonishment to me how I escaped the bullet, that—ere the words were well out of O'reilly's mouth—whistled a most unpleasant tune close to my ear. I remember standing still for a single 159 moment, at which time I must have offered a very fair mark to the gentleman, the shining muzzle of whose well polished rifle I saw the next instant, still smoking, and pointed at me through a small opening in the thickest of the brushwood. In consequence of the closeness of the bushes, I was unable to bring my musket round to return the compliment, though it would have proved a random shot, for I could not see the individual who had so nearly brought my volunteering to a close; I felt relieved when I heard O'reilly's voice again.

“Hush, hush!” cried he, (my Irish friend was still invisible) “it’s a Yakee! The cowardly thief’s skulking behind a tree! Come out and be shot like a man, you ugly-looking naygur.”

Here he stopped short, and presently came plunging to my side with a crash through the bushes in which he had been concealed, armed with a rifle, which I afterwards ascertained he had picked up; it had probably belonged to one of the Californians who had fallen under our fire, and he now kept it close up to his left shoulder, and ready to lower it at the first stir in the brushwood. Making a sign to me with his left hand to keep back, and then stealing forward through a small opening between two bushes, he crept on, my eyes mechanically following his movements. I now caught sight—a mere glimpse—of something which I at first took to be part of the trunk of a tree, but which I soon perceived to be a Yakee, who stood partially concealed by it.

“Hush!” again muttered O’reilly, lowering his rifle; “I’ve got him now; just look what a jig he’ll dance.”

There was a pause of a few moments—of a minute perhaps—during which we heard the voices of our comrades, varied now and then by the report of a musket; they were not far off, although completely hidden from our view. I actually trembled with excitement, and though the heat was intense, a cold, clammy sweat stood on my brow, and oozed out at the tips of my fingers. O’reilly’s rifle still covered the tree, but the Yakee did not move; all at once the report of another musket, very close to him I fancy, induced him to step cautiously out, his intention being, no doubt, to conceal himself more effectually; I saw him look inquisitively round, without exhibiting any symptom of fear, then came the sharp report of my companion’s rifle, and the Indian rolled over, a lifeless corpse.

“Hurrah!” shouted O’reilly in triumph, “I knew I’d make a clean job of him. Come on, my beauties, if there are any more of ye.”

Telling my companion to moderate his excitement, I proceeded with him to the spot where the Yakee lay. A fine fellow he was—young, handsome, and powerfully built. O’reilly’s ball had

struck him under the left arm, and had, no doubt, pierced the heart. To my great annoyance, my companion commenced very coolly appropriating to himself the contents of a small purse of skin, which the Indian wore slung from his belt, as also his cartridges; the rifle he handed to me, and I took it, leaving my musket on the spot.

“Sure, all this money's no good to him now,” replied he to a remonstrance I ventured 162 to make; “the fellow could never have got it honestly, and, if *we* didn't do it, somebody else wouldn't be long about it.”

This was correct enough as a prediction, and I afterwards discovered the utter uselessness of remonstrance against the practice of regarding the money that might be found on a fallen foe as so much lawful booty. In this instance, it only amounted to a few dollars. I said no more, and proceeded to assist O'reilly to reload his rifle, the one I had being ready charged: it had been the last act of the Yakee.

We again soon became entangled in the bushes, and separated from each other, both intent upon making the best of our way to our companions, whom we no longer heard in our vicinity. It was not long, however, before I heard three sharp reports, followed up by the shouts of O'reilly, whose whereabouts I at last succeeded in discovering. He was engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with two Yakee Indians, the three having discharged their pieces without effect previously to 163 engaging in this close and desperate conflict. I ought to observe, that, although O'reilly had abandoned his musket, he had first removed the bayonet, and adjusted it to his rifle; an example I had likewise followed. He was thrusting desperately at the two Indians, who, on their side, parried every thrust with the greatest dexterity, using the butt-end of their pieces for this purpose. I levelled my rifle, intending to assist him; but the curious manner in which the combatants dodged about rendered it a matter of uncertainty whether I might not shoot my comrade instead of either of his opponents.

My momentary hesitation was not of much consequence, as it turned out; for, finding he could not get at them, he sprang aside, and, dexterously twisting his rifle round so as to grasp the muzzle, he began whirling it about until he got the chance of bringing the butt-end of it down upon the head of

the nearest Indian, who fell instantly; seeing which, the other leaped into the bush and disappeared. I fired at him as he fled, but, I believe, 164 without effect. His companion was only stunned, and we had no difficulty in securing him.

This little affair was scarcely over before my services were claimed in the most piteous accents, and, looking about me, I discovered one of our party so painfully entangled in the adjacent bushes, that to advance or to retreat without assistance was alike impossible. He had endeavoured, whilst in hot pursuit of the two Yakees in question, to clear at a leap some bushes, the width of which he had not calculated, and being encumbered with his heavy accoutrements, arms, and ammunition, had, in the attempt, fallen short, and plunged into a hollow covered by the brushwood; amongst which he got fast stuck, his body being inextricably bound by coils of brambles and thorny bushes, which had lacerated him in the most cruel manner. I soon released him; and we set off again, shouting, at the top of our voices, to attract the attention of our comrades.

In the course of another hour, during which we had several smart chases, and wounded a 165 number of Yakees and Spaniards, as they made off, we came up with several of our party, and finally emerged from this forest of jungle, all of us most deplorably cut and mangled by the thorns, our clothes torn to rags, the blood and the perspiration streaming from our hands, faces, and legs, and our persons completely encased in a covering of dirt and sand. We had left our horses and mules at the entrance of the forest, so we had now to walk a considerable distance in search of them. Thanks to the activity and watchfulness of our guides, we soon recovered them; and, having clambered the heights to which I have already alluded, advanced towards the town. Every Californian had fled except two, and they wisely lost no time in following the example of their brethren. The hindmost man we recognised as one of our late guides, and the other fugitive a large, bulky Yakee. The latter made for the crags at the very top of his speed, and escaped the three first shots that were fired at him—the fourth struck him: he leaped up, then dropped, writhed, 166 and rolled over the rock into the precipitous valley beneath.

We took up our quarters in the church and the adjoining mission buildings, our standard-bearer clambering to the top of the former, where he left our colours flying. At the corner of the street in



which the church stands, we saw a Yakee Indian sitting on a stone, and suffering intense anguish from the effect of a musket-ball, which had shattered the bone of his right leg in the most shocking manner. We proffered every assistance our medical and surgical resources would allow of, but he steadfastly refused all our offers, and we consequently abandoned him as lost; but some time after I learned, that, under the care of the natives, he had perfectly recovered.

Our men were completely exhausted from the fatigue of the march, the recent fight, and the want of food; and, as soon as we were housed, we began to think of refreshment. To our consternation, there were but a few pieces of dried beef left; and, what was worse, nothing could be procured, for the 167 huts had been abandoned and cleared of every thing in the shape of victuals, and our foraging parties returned empty-handed. In this dilemma we sallied forth in a body, determined to procure wherewith to satisfy Nature's cravings; and, descending from the town, entered one of the loveliest valleys I have ever seen in Lower California, almost encircled by a clear and rapid stream, about eight feet wide, but shallow. Hungry as we were, the luxury of a bath in our present condition was irresistible, and we plunged into the water like so many spaniels. Our bathe over, we were further rejoiced by the discovery of an extensive sugar plantation, where the rich canes, just arrived at maturity, stood temptingly inviting. Never did a herd of famished wolves pounce more ravenously upon a flock than did we upon these delicious canes. Our knives and jaws were soon in full activity, and we kept the latter hard at work for the space of three mortal hours, without, however, satisfying our stomachs. At length we were fairly beaten; we could chew no longer, 168 our jaws ached so; nevertheless, we each cut a bundle of canes, and marched across the plantation into another part of the valley, where—equally to our satisfaction—we discovered a field of Indian corn not more than half ripe, but upon which we fell, notwithstanding, making up each man his load, with which we returned to our quarters. We did not fail to renew our visits to both plantations, in which we made surprising havoc in the course of a few days.

I may observe, of the church and of the mission buildings, that they are the largest and most imposing structures of the kind in Lower California. The former has a handsome front and a very lofty steeple, and a gateway, common to the church and the mission-house, opens at once into the interior; the latter has a piazza, to which the pillars, forming arches at the top, impart a rather novel

effect; it doubtless formed the favourite promenade of the old Jesuits, who were protected by it from the sun and the rain. When I looked around upon the desolate 169 region in the midst of which such a noble structure had been erected for the advancement of education and religion, I could not refrain from paying my humble tribute of admiration to the enterprising spirit which had conceived and carried out so grand an idea.

The church was ransacked in search of valuables, but every article of price had already disappeared, save sundry robes in which the priests were accustomed to officiate at the altar, and the gold and silver lace on which were stripped off, and converted into ornaments for the head-stalls of the men's horses and mules.

In the mission-house we had a somewhat remarkable prisoner in the person of Father Gabriel, the head of the church in California, and one of those intriguing, restless, and turbulent spirits who had most contributed to excite the people to take arms. He was a short, thick-set, and unwieldy specimen of clerical self-denial, with a head as bald and shining as a newly-polished orange, to the complexion 170 of which that of his face closely approximated. The expression of his countenance was decidedly sensual; but there was a keenness in his brilliant eye that denoted the shrewd, worldly mind, and the clever political concocter of schemes. He was reputed wealthy, and possessed a large *ranché* at a short distance from Todos Santos, where he employed a great many Indians in the manufacturing of soap, *penocha*, and other articles which he traded in, realizing on them an enormous profit. He probably feared that the arrival of the Americans in Lower California, of which he had been long the virtual monarch, would materially diminish his influence and his gains; hence his bitter animosity, and the pertinacity with which he devoted his talents, his influence, and his wealth, to organizing a spirited resistance against them. I may add, that scandal reported him to be the father of twenty-two children.

We had not been long in the town before we were invaded by a number of Yakees, who came to surrender themselves as prisoners, 171 their confidence in us being awakened by the kindness we exhibited to a few of their brethren whom we had captured. Their arrival greatly embarrassed us, as we were so short of provisions; indeed, the straits we were reduced to rendered it necessary to

send back a party of our men to La Paz, in order to procure a fresh supply; whilst a second party received orders to scour the neighbouring country on the same errand, and likewise to see that the enemy were not lurking about. This latter point being set at rest, and the object of our expedition to Todos Santos accomplished, our commander probably thought we had better not await the return of the men who had been sent back to La Paz; for, at the end of a week, we received instructions to resume our journey to this latter town; and, as we were somewhat rested, we set off in better spirits than might have been anticipated, taking a different path—I cannot call it a road—from the one we had followed in coming.

One evening we came upon a Yakee 172 encampment, in a deep hollow on our left, which was betrayed to us by the light of the fires. As we were concealed from the Indians by a thick skirting of brushwood, we crept cautiously forward, with a view to take them by surprise, when one of our men, perceiving a figure moving in the obscurity, fired his musket at it without orders; on which the Yakees all leaped up, with a loud yell, and disappeared instantly in the bushes. Almost immediately after, one of our guides presented himself in the midst of us, bleeding from a severe flesh-wound in the arm, he having been the victim of our comrade's rashness. This was another specimen of the irregularities of the volunteer system.

My poor “blood-horse” was now so completely worn out, that, finding him worse than useless—for he had become a burden—I made up my mind to abandon him, which I accordingly did, not far from a patch of pasture, and from a tolerably well-beaten track. I was myself scarcely less fatigued, and lagged behind several times to snatch a little rest. 173 Many of our party did the same; indeed, I remarked, that the stoutest and biggest gave in first; whilst the little fellows—I am small myself—battled it out bravely, and got along with much less seeming difficulty. On one of these occasions, I tarried behind a full hour after the last of our laggards had passed me; but, finding dusk fast setting in, I recommenced my journey, and went on until I lost the path. At first, I stood aghast, looking behind and before, to the left, to the right—and, in short, in every direction, but in vain. I went a little way back, and tried to make out the track; then, not succeeding, pushed on ahead, but with no better fortune. I turned round and struck off at random, continuing my course until I came to a dead stop at an ugly shelf of rock overlooking a deep chasm between the crags. I will not

attempt to describe my feelings. I remember thinking of my mother and friends, and of a picture I had somewhere seen of the finding of a lost traveller's skeleton. I think I then said the "Lord's Prayer," and afterwards sat down and wept, until I actually dozed, though my mind was, all the time, wandering upon my unfortunate position. All at once I sprang to my feet, growing desperate, I suppose, and set off running as fast as I could, and, as nearly as I could guess, in the direction from which I had come; until, I imagine, I must have traversed some five miles of ground. I then began to abuse myself for my folly in not endeavouring to seek signs of the passage of living things, as the Indians do when they lose the trail, and forthwith commenced my search, every sense acquiring extraordinary keenness. Still I found no symptom of a track, and in despair cast myself on my face upon the sand, giving myself up for lost. Suddenly, as I lay there, I heard a thumping noise on the ground, which I instantly recognised to be the tramp of hoofs; and listening now with increased vigilance, soon ascertained the direction of the sound, and scampered off towards it.

Unbounded was my joy, on reaching a turn in the course I was following, to come upon an Indian hut, in front of which were two natives with their mules saddled and bridled, they having, apparently, just arrived. There was yet sufficient light to enable me to distinguish them to be Californians, not Yakees; but I did not feel so sure of them as to be at my ease, however great the relief I experienced at being rescued from the lingering death I had anticipated. Nevertheless, I went up and strove to make them comprehend that I had lost my way, and was entirely at their mercy: their only reply was, "No, no!" After a long and fruitless attempt to brighten up their understandings by a complicated series of telegraphic signs, and perceiving that they were about to remount, I intimated my wish to get up behind one of them—selecting the lesser man of the two, out of pity to his beast—and adding, "*Soldado Americano*." They both replied by reiterating the last syllable of the second word, "No, no!" though, as I subsequently understood, they meant that they were neither of them American soldiers.

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Now, as I did not relish being left behind, and had not yet lost all hope, I made no ceremony, but nimbly leaped upon the mule I had selected, just as its rider had taken his seat, whom I firmly grasped, and who, to my surprise, and no small satisfaction, gave his animal the spur without taking

the least notice of me. In fact, I thought he seemed rather amused, if anything. I could not help wondering, however, where this adventure would terminate, for, although I retained my rifle, they were not unarmed, and I felt myself wholly in their power, and even fancied how easily they might carry me off a prisoner. The first intimation I procured of their possibly being friends, was by my hand coming into contact with an India rubber knapsack, which my companion carried before him, and which he had hinted to me his desire that I should grasp, probably because, as I sat, I somewhat inconvenienced his movements. I knew, by the peculiar make of this knapsack, that it belonged to our volunteer corps, and began to conjecture whether these 177 two men might not form a part of our body of Californian guides; on the other hand, it might be spoil taken from one of the comrades we had lost: however, my doubts were in due time set at rest by our coming up to a *ranché*;, about which my companions were congregated, and feasting right merrily. They were heartily rejoiced to see me, and I returned the compliment with great sincerity. I related my mishap, which was interpreted to my two friends, who then informed me that they had stayed behind to rest and refresh, and that I must have been going round and round the very place where they first saw me, from the moment I missed the path, until I so luckily fell into it again. Had I pushed boldly onwards, when I fancied I had lost myself, I should not have incurred so much anxiety, but have come up at last with the main body of the volunteers.

After taking some refreshment, we renewed our march; the country through which we passed being, if anything, even wilder than our former route. No circumstance, 178 however, deserving of record occurred, except our meeting with the return party from La Paz (which had been sent for a supply of provisions) shortly after our falling into the old road again. It was a most fortunate meeting; had we missed each other, there would have been much time lost, and much fatigue and anxiety uselessly incurred, as the party would have gone forward to Todos Santos, and have then had to return to La Paz. As it fell out—more thanks to our luck and their than to the good management of our leader—we got back together. When we entered the town, we looked like a band of barbarians, so unshaven and travel-soiled were we, but a few days' repose recruited us wonderfully, albeit our quarters were none of the best.

We had been back about ten days, when we heard of the return of Black Jack, and a party of fifty men, who had been sent out on an expedition to the head of the gulf; and the same person who brought this news likewise informed us that two Indians, whom they 179 had captured some fifty miles off and conducted hither, had just been shot by command of this officer. Several of us went to the spot where the tragedy had been enacted, and there saw the two dead bodies, and several of our men digging graves in the sand. I felt deep disgust, when I came to learn the particulars of this murder, which seemed to have been perpetrated without any pretext, even regarding it in the light of an execution. It appeared that they had surrendered themselves prisoners, and the men had spared their lives, notwithstanding Black Jack's orders that every Indian they took should be shot on the spot. He justified the act, by asserting that they had committed violence on some women at one of the *ranchés*, where the party had halted some days before; but this was the first the men had heard of it, and the whole story was besides so improbable, seeing that the men had never been lost sight of, that it could be attributed to nothing save a reckless spirit of blood-shedding. I afterwards ascertained that one of the victims was a Yakee; 180 the other a native of La Paz, who had joined this Indian tribe. His mother and his sister were both kneeling over his corpse, and giving way to their grief in the most frantic manner. The general impression was, that presuming their guilt, they ought to have been at least tried, especially as they had reached head-quarters; and I remember that the feeling became very strong against Black Jack on account of this sad event, which we looked upon as calculated to get us a name for cruelty we really did not deserve.

I found our old friend Wettermark snugly installed in a hut which he had constructed very neatly of bamboo, and covered with dry leaves, quite in the Indian style. He had taken this trouble because he neither liked his quarters nor his companions, who were always plaguing him, and because he wanted to place beyond the reach of its tormentors a cub-fox he had caught in one of his iron traps, and which he had tamed. But the oddest circumstance connected with this affair was, that he had succeeded, by importuning the colonel, 181 in getting the fox its regular rations, just as if it had been one of the corps; a fact which afforded considerable merriment to the wags of the various companies.

Our time at La Paz did not hang heavily upon our hands, for we soon made acquaintance with the townspeople, who received us very hospitably, and entertained us well. Nor can I take leave of this place without bearing testimony to the beauty of its women, those of Castilian descent being perhaps the handsomest; although the next caste, namely, that but slightly tintured with Indian blood, might fairly lay an equal claim to the palm. The pure Indians are coarse and swarthy, as, indeed, are all the Mexicans, but perfect models of form, and of most winning gentleness and kindness. The usual dress of the women consists of a white muslin or calico gown, extremely loose to the figure, with a *rebosa* or scarf of the same, which they cast over their heads, and let fall in graceful folds about their persons. Their feet are protected by a tiny slipper, frequently of the most delicate texture, which barely covers the toes, the instep being left exposed. The majority dispense with stockings, but, as their dress reaches to the ankle, these are superfluous. I have seen some, too, who allowed the body of their gown to fall about their waist, substituting for it, so as partially to conceal their bust and their arms, a *camisas* of the simplest form. The heat of the climate renders a loose style of dress absolutely necessary for ordinary comfort's sake. I may add, that the women perform the most laborious household work, such as cutting up, salting, and drying, beef, grinding corn for *tortillas*, chopping wood, fetching water from the wells, frequently up the steepest elevations, and so forth. But they appear to do all this very cheerfully, whilst their lords are taking their pleasure at a race, a bull-fight, or at the gambling-table.

We remained a fortnight in La Paz, after the return from Todos Santos, and then received an intimation that we were to proceed to San José, which town had been fixed upon as our headquarters. Accordingly, we were embarked on board the store-ship Southampton, then lying in the harbour, and, after a few days' sail, were safely landed on the beach of this last-mentioned town.

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## CHAPTER IX.

San José—The Valley of San José—Drills, sickness, convalescence, and sentiment—The inhabitants of San José—Mutiny—Black Jack again—Native funereal ceremonies—Black Jack's

disgrace—First news of the gold mines—Embarkation for Monterey—Premonitory symptoms of the gold fever.

Our landing was effected with no further discomfort than was to be expected from our having to incur the chances of a ducking; as the boats were unable, on account of the shallowness of the water and the strong tide, to approach within a comfortable distance of *terra firma*. This, however, reckoned for nothing: nor did our tedious march to the town, though it was only three miles from the beach; nor our being several times nearly buried alive in the heaps of sand that filled the hollows of the road; nor our having to wade through a stream of some twenty feet 185 wide that crossed it at the most inconvenient part, to say nothing of the broiling heat; altogether, and notwithstanding that we thought but little of it at the time, it was the most uncomfortable and tedious march—for such a short one—I ever remember to have encountered.

The principal, indeed the only regular street in the town, is wide and long, the houses being constructed of *adobe* and cane, thatched with palm leaves. It is blocked up at the remoter end by the fort, which stands upon a wide foundation of rock of considerable elevation; various portions of the *adobe* walls connecting the crags having been pierced, so as to allow artillery to be trained through the embrasures, whilst, in other parts, there are numerous loopholes for musketry. There are some very awkward cavities amongst these rocks, produced, as I subsequently ascertained, by digging for clay for the *adobe* work. The fort is flat-roofed and parapetted, having portholes for cannon; and below, in the very centre of the building, occupying about a third of its 186 entire length, runs a thick wall, forming a crescent, well-mounted with heavy guns. At the end of this crescent, between it and the front wall, is the entrance to the fort—a mere aperture, barely wide enough to allow of one man's passing in. These defences, imperfect as they were, had proved of immense advantage to the Americans during the recent siege, who had kept up, from behind them, a very destructive fire upon the enemy.

In the *correl* I found, huddled up in one corner, about thirty Yakees and Indians of Lower California, many of them doubly-ironed, and most of them half naked, whilst all were dirty, and fierce even in bondage. Some marines were mounted as a guard over them and were engaged in



animated conversation with several coarse-looking women, their paramours; the latter had sought the protection of the Americans, and distinguished themselves in the recent conflicts, having endured, in common with the men, the most severe privations. The majority were weeping and sobbing; being on the point of separation from the objects of

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187 their passing attachment, who were about to be transferred to the Southampton along with their prisoners—to be conveyed to Mazatlan—as soon as the vessel had discharged the stores she had brought for the use of the garrison.

The town of San José is one of the most extraordinary creations, in the shape of a dwelling-place, that I have ever seen. The heavy rains and freshets which occur in the wet season, in this region, render every elevation invaluable as a preservative against the dangers of sudden inundations; hence all the houses are built upon steeps, rocks, and hillocks, necessarily irrespective of order; so that, even in the most densely populated districts, barren hills, as yet unoccupied by dwellings, are frequently to be met with, with deep hollows in every part, converting mere visits into positive enterprises, in most instances both tedious and disagreeable. To these great natural disadvantages, the indolence of the inhabitants has added others, their common practice being to dig for *adobe* clay at the 188 nearest convenient spot, namely, for the most part, opposite their own doors; thus, one would imagine that the site of the whole town had been visited and disturbed by a succession of miniature earthquakes, which, whilst they had left the houses themselves unshaken, had heaved and perched them up in the most uncomfortable positions, and in the most inaccessible places. In the very centre of the principal street, which appears to have once upon a time been level, are three or four immense clay-pits, serving as a receptacle for dead dogs, cats, bones, vegetable refuse, and, in a word, every description of rubbish and nuisance a very dirty population can convey to or discharge into them.

But my description of the town would be incomplete without adding that it is dotted about in these hollows, and in the sand-holes in the rocks, with patches of thorn, brush, and cacti, forming a singular yet refreshing contrast with the general barrenness of the region itself, the whole being

surrounded by a bleak mountainous range, which increases in 189 elevation until it blends with the clear sky, far in the distance.

I ought, however, not to omit stating that this desert region is redeemed from its ungenial character by the beautiful valley of San José, which stretches right across the peninsula, from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of California, a distance of not less than from a hundred and fifty to nearly two hundred miles.

It is with a feeling approximating to wonderment that the spectator looks down upon the opening of this valley from a precipitous hill close to the fort; so unprepared is he, by the general aspect of nature here, to behold a sandy plain thickly studded with luxuriant orchards and plantations, surrounded and enclosed by tropical plants of great height and beauty, with narrow paths intersecting the bushes and brushwood, and here and there a solitary *ranché* perched aloft on some commanding crag, until the whole landscape, losing itself in the distant mountains, fades into those soft and dreamy tints peculiar to torrid latitudes.

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A few days after our arrival, the remains of M'Clanahan were exhumed, and deposited in a rude coffin, previously to their being conveyed to the spot selected for their last resting-place. The body had been at first interred in a temporary grave dug in one corner of the *correl* I have mentioned. It was now carried to the summit of a mound of earth, overlooking the sea, and there buried with all the honours of war. The crew of the *Ciane*, equipped in a semi-military costume, joined the volunteers, and formed a grand funeral procession, whilst the officers of the vessel paid a last tribute to the memory of their deceased companion-in-arms, by the erection of a rail-fence round the spot.

Our duties in this place were extremely severe; we had drills in the morning, drills in the afternoon, and very frequently artillery exercise; for, as the natives gave open intimation of their hatred of the Americans, apprehensions were entertained of a rising, and it was thought prudent to be prepared for the worst. The fatigue proved too much for me; 191 and being constantly exposed

to the broiling sun, I fell sick of the *calentura*, and lay for some time in my miserable quarters, completely prostrated, both physically and mentally.

On my recovery, I usually sought the society of the natives, who ever received and treated me with the greatest kindness, and to whom I soon recommended myself by my poor talent for sketching portraits. I found the women to possess an extremely pleasing exterior; their complexion was a little dark, perhaps, but this imparted additional piquancy to their countenances. Their costume being of the simplest possible character, afforded me many opportunities of admiring their fair proportions. They are indeed singularly well-shaped, though somewhat remarkable for *embonpoint*. Their feet, legs, and arms, are usuall bare; but they wear their dresses long, and loosely wrapped about their persons: so that this custom is not only devoid of indecorum, but rather becoming than otherwise.

With one of these Californian maidens I 192 almost fell desperately in love; indeed, considering how shattered my nervous system had become from illness, and how romantically kind Cacusa showed herself in her simple attentions, my wonderment is that I did not become inextricably involved in a downright sentimental dilemma. She was very beautiful, and that is the plain, honest truth; so beautiful, I should fear to describe her, lest my portraiture might be thought to be merely drawn from imagination. I will, therefore, dismiss the subject, merely observing that I was somewhat surprised at finding that the Christian name of my rustic beauty was synonymous with “Jesus;” it being the custom of the country to christen persons by all sorts of Scriptural names, without reference to their appropriateness to sex or to circumstance; and that, although I did *not* fall in love with Cacusa—at least not too deeply—her image will at times steal across my memory.

The population of San José may average three thousand persons, the majority being semi-Indians, or the pure descendants of the 193 Mexicans. Our volunteers were well received amongst them, and experienced numerous acts of kindness at their hands. They are greatly addicted to gambling, their favourite game being *monté*, which is in universal esteem throughout the Californias. They are also a musical people; and although I always considered their mirthful songs to savour more of the dirge than of the ditty, I observed that they kept good time, and accompanied themselves well on the guitar.

I may add that the ladies of San José, as of the whole of Lower California, are extravagantly fond of smoking; their *cigaritos* being composed of tobacco, rolled up to a convenient size in the leaf of the Indian maize; some did ample justice to a few choice Havannahs I presented to them, though I could never reconcile myself altogether to the habit as being one suited to the sex. But tastes differ.

The usual beverages, besides water, are wine, *mascal*, and *aguardiente*. The two latter are manufactured in large quantities in the valley 194 of San José; the last named tastes something like Irish whiskey, but the other is fiery and unpalatable, and unlike any liquor I have ever drunk. The wine is good, the vines being of the finest kind, and the vineyards numerous and highly productive.

The fertile parts of the country produce wheat, maize, beans, pease, sweet potatoes and Irish, sugar-cane, vegetables of all sorts in profusion, and abundance of fruits, including oranges, limes, lemons, plantain, and other kinds of tropical fruits, all of which are cultivated in their utmost luxuriance. But the *petia*, which is taken from a species of the cactus, appears to be the general favourite in California, and the inhabitants have a method of converting it into a kind of jam, or preserve, which, being put up in the leaves of the Indian corn, in quantities of from a quarter to half a pound, is retailed at the price of a *real*, or sixpence each packet. These packages are very neat, one leaf overlapping the other about the fruit, and both twisted tightly together at the ends.

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I have already observed that the valley of San José, taken as a whole, seems extremely fertile; and I may add, that the land in California, susceptible of cultivation, yields, in proportion to the quantity under culture, the largest crops in the world. If artificial means of irrigation were introduced, the happiest effects would result, for bread-stuffs could then be produced in abundance, and thus would be removed the great drawback at present existing to a large and rapid increase of the population of Lower California.

Abundance of rain falls here during the winter season, which, I think, might easily be husbanded in convenient reservoirs, so as to furnish an easy supply when wanted, and be made to fertilize extensive tracks of the valley, which are now lying neglected and waste, from no other cause than

the want of the means of proper irrigation. I was informed that every three or four years, the entire country is swept by terrific tornadoes, accompanied with torrents of water. These rains prove highly acceptable to the natives, who 196 often suffer severely from drought. We had several such deluges during our stay, the rain falling in spouts, and rolling in rivulets down the hills, filling every hollow, and converting a large portion of the immense and beautiful valley into a dangerous lagoon. I can with truth say, that I have never seen such rains, nor am I at all desirous of again witnessing them.

The severity of the discipline here became so excessive, that irregularities soon broke out, which shortly afterwards ripened into absolute insubordination. The culprits were committed to the black-hole, many of them for offences extremely trivial; and with the thermometer at 80 and 90 in the month of May, their sufferings became severe to an excess. I ought to state that their place of confinement was simply one half of the guard-room, which had been separated from the other by a strong party-wall of *adobe*, built up to the ceiling, and having but the very smallest aperture for the admission of light and air, and this in quantities barely sufficient for the preservation 197 of life. At Monterey, two men had been suffocated, I understood, from their being confined in a similar hole; two of ours fainted soon, and were brought-to only by exposure to a purer atmosphere. To all remonstrances, however, “Black Jack” turned a deaf ear; and, as it soon appeared, they only rendered matters worse, for he sent a message to the commander of the *Ciane* sloop-of-war (which was then lying off Mazatlan), to the effect that the garrison of San José was in a state of mutiny; and on the 14th of May she appeared in the roadstead. Immediately upon her arrival, four of the men were sent on board, doubly ironed, to be conveyed to Mazatlan, and thence to Monterey, for trial before a court-martial.

The death of one of the natives, soon after our arrival here, afforded me an opportunity of witnessing the singular ceremonies observed on such occasions. The body, being enshrouded in white muslin, is bedecked with flowers, and laid out upon a table. The friends and relatives are next invited, and a feast 198 takes place, which is always followed by a general fandango around the corpse. When a priest can be procured, he usually presides at these funereal festivities; but more frequently than otherwise his services are dispensed with altogether, for, when all is over, the body is conveyed to the burying-place, and lowered into the grave without any form of prayer

whatsoever. Coffins are very rarely used by the poorer classes, wood of every description being scarce, and planks and boards of almost incredible value.

I have already twice alluded to “Black Jack,” in connexion with several deeds of blood, for the commission of which no one had ever ventured to assert that he had any authority. One day, during our stay here, there came an express, which was read to the volunteers on parade, and which proved to be a command from Governor Mason, that “Black Jack” should be forthwith arrested on the charge of having unlawfully shot two Californians and two Yakee Indian chiefs, and that he should be confined until he could take his 199 trial at head-quarters. The Governor further ordered that this expression of his opinion on the matter should be published in all the Mexican and United States' newspapers, with a view to remove from the American government any stigma that might attach to it, in consequence of these atrocious deeds. The express was received with acclamation, and the redoubtable “Black Jack” at once consigned to durance vile.

Whilst we were here awaiting the arrival of the despatch which was to release us from service, news reached us of several extensive and prolific gold mines having been discovered in Upper California, and of large fortunes having been realized in an incredibly brief space of time, by the lucky few who chanced to be on the spot, or in the more immediate neighbourhood. At first, the report was treated very lightly, the majority of our men laughing at the idea of gold being found in abundance on the ground; and the whole affair being considered as a hoax got up to induce an emigration into those parts, we 200 heard little or nothing more about it for awhile.

At last information was received of the signing of the treaty of peace, and we expected to be at once dismissed. Unfortunately a serious difficulty presented itself to prevent our departure, and we were compelled to remain three months longer, until negotiations had been entered into for the satisfactory adjustment of the question at issue. It appears that the Americans had agreed to renounce all pretensions to Lower California, whilst the colonel commanding the troops there had given the people to understand that the United States would never resign the country; hence, he found himself seriously compromised with the natives, many of whom had joined the Americans, believing that under their flag they would enjoy a greater degree of liberty, and more

certain protection of life and property. On this supposition, and presuming that the United States' Government would certainly not relinquish the country it had conquered, they had abandoned  
201 their own countrymen, and become objects of the bitterest hatred to the large majority of Californians and Yakees, who threatened them with indiscriminate and wholesale slaughter, as soon as their allies, the Americans, should have withdrawn, and their vessels of war left the port. Under these circumstances, the government finally concluded to transport the friendly Californian to the upper country, and to indemnify them for the losses they had sustained at our hands, or at those of the enemy, in consequence of their having sided with us. This point being satisfactorily settled, immediate preparations were made for transferring the garrison, and those who were to accompany it, on board the ships of war lying in the harbour, namely, the Warren, the Southampton, and the Ohio; the troops from La Paz being embarked on board the latter, and the remainder, with the women and children, in the Warren. Finally, the American flag was hauled down from the fort, and the Mexican run up in its place; a salute was fired, and San José was no longer American.

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Our destination was Monterey; and we had not been long on board the Ohio, before we again heard of the gold mines, and of the gold fever. Three Germans, who had embarked with us at San José, were determined to seek their fortunes in the favoured country, and had amply provided themselves with every requisite. The sailors related the most extraordinary accounts which had been received from “the diggings,” and ere long the entire conversation turned, and continued to turn, upon the same topic, every one being infected more or less with the mania for gold-hunting, and more or less resolved to gratify it, as soon as the opportunity for doing so should present itself.

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## **CHAPTER X.**

Monterey after the gold-fever—Gold a stronger allurements than glory—The Governor decamps—Difficulty upon difficulty—Disgraceful disbanding of the volunteer corps—Pardon, and escape of “Black Jack”—Organization of gold-hunting parties—Mining regulations—A murder—My own

resolution—I get up a party—Bargains for horses—Spanish trickery—A fresh dilemma—Final preparations—The start for the mines.

We reached Monterey again towards the end of August, and landed full of hope, feeling satisfied we should be immediately disbanded, paid, and once more our own masters; free to seek fortune at the “diggings,” or elsewhere if we fancied it. But a sore disappointment awaited us. Governor Mason had decamped to the mines; the streets were unpeopled; the houses empty, and the town deserted: with the exception of a stray “regular” now and then, not a living soul was to be met with. Everybody was off to the real Tom Tiddler’s ground, to pick up the gold and silver. From one of these straggling regulars we heard that the soldiers had long ago abandoned the fort on the hill, all attempts to prevent them from deserting their post proving utterly futile against the influence of the thirst for gold, which every fresh account from the mines aggravated. Pursuit was useless; it had been tried and failed, for the pursuers in turn became the pursued, until Governor Mason himself, learning from experience that gold possessed stronger allurements to the soldiers than glory, followed the general example, taking with him a small government cart and a negro servant. He was reported to be away on government business; but no doubt was entertained of the real purpose of his journey to the mines, namely, to speculate in gold, which at this time could be bought there for a fourth of its real value in coined money.

Colonel B— now assumed the command of the post in the absence of the Governor; and, upon application being made to him for quarters, we were informed there were none provided, and we must shift in tents as well as we could. The misery of such accommodations soon became intolerable, for, having come from a very warm latitude but recently, the cold and the torrents of rain together threatened to convert every tent into an hospital. In this strait, we resolved to procure better lodgings at any risk, and proceeded at once to break open and instal ourselves in such houses as we judged most suited to our wants. I took possession of the school house—the door of which I ought, in self justification, to add, stood invitingly open—and found the private apartments of the schoolmaster exceedingly comfortable. The rest of the house was rapidly appropriated by other parties, and became crowded to excess. Some of the volunteers, nevertheless, preferred remaining in their tents, for reasons which we were not long in discovering. They were on the look-out for



horses, which they were of opinion could be better looked after 206 a little way out of the town, and were not so likely to be stolen from them.

We all felt anxious to be moving towards the valley of gold as soon as possible, but not a word had we yet heard respecting what was just then of very considerable importance to us, namely, the pay which the Government owed us for several months' service, and an honourable and formal discharge—lacking which latter document, we should want our title to the one hundred and sixty acres of land that had been promised to the volunteers as an additional incentive—over and above their pay—to remain faithful to their country's flag. Indeed, so many were the difficulties experienced by us at last in procuring this important instrument, and so desirous were we to depart, that, with two exceptions, the whole body of us were obliged to take the Colonel's verbal dismissal; a circumstance that ultimately involved the majority in an extreme difficulty, when they sought to prove their right to the land in question.

As we found that no intimation was given 207 us of the period when we might expect to be dismissed, and the time was rapidly passing away, we applied to the Colonel, who replied that he had no power, in the absence of the Governor, to formally discharge the volunteers, and they must, therefore, wait. But the men were growing too impatient to accept this answer as final, and appealed to the Commodore. He, however, refused to interfere, on the plea of this matter being a military question, but expressed an opinion that the Colonel possessed sufficient authority as commander of the post. Further delays ensued, additional remonstrances, more procrastination, stronger representations—but we persisted in our demand until the Colonel finally yielded; probably in consequence of orders received, in the interim, from Governor Mason. A day was accordingly appointed for us to be paid off, when, it being discovered that four or five of the tents had been secreted or carried off, we were informed that we should not be discharged until they were forthcoming. This proceeding, although perfectly just, so 208 exasperated the men—already annoyed by having been detained several months beyond their term of service—that, had it not been for the presence of mind and moderation of one of the lieutenants, the Colonel would certainly have been tarred and feathered on the instant. The affair was ultimately settled by the discovery of the

offenders, and an arrangement that they should restore the tents or have the value of them deducted from their pay.

I ought, perhaps, to observe, that these tents had been secreted, to serve as accommodation to a party who were bent upon starting at once for the mines, and who were resolved to go as comfortably equipped as possible. They probably argued, that, as Government had failed in fulfilling its promise to them, they were entitled to make free with anything belonging to it as a set-off against unrequited extra services. I can only add, that I do not feel any surprise at such a step being taken, for the conduct of the Government towards the volunteers was a disgrace to it. We had left the States less in the capacity of volunteers than of armed emigrants, depending upon the good faith of the legislature to make arrangements for such of us as chose to do so, to settle in the country we were sent, not only to conquer, but to colonize. But our term of service was permitted to expire, and some months were passed in absolute idleness; yet we got no remuneration, and were even obliged to give up our arms, and to turn out into this desolate and dangerous region without the means of defence, without shelter, and even without provisions.

Fortunately for us, there arrived here, at this crisis, one Colonel Stevenson, with a party of men from Pueblo de Los Angeles, the whole of them being on their way to the mines. To his influence we owed a supply of flint-lock muskets, in the proportion of one to every two men, twenty cartridges, and one month's rations; all of which we received as so much instalment on what was really due to us, namely, mileage and scrip, to say nothing of our legal title to our one hundred and sixty acres of land. But even this was better than nothing, though we owed it to strange interference and to the generosity of the good old Commodore.

It was, doubtless, entirely attributable to the excitement of the moment that little more than passing heed was taken of a circumstance which, at any other time, would have been fraught with deep interest to us, namely, the discharge of the so-called mutineers of San José, who had been brought hither on board the Ohio, and were now liberated without trial, in consequence of the promulgation of a general pardon granted by the President of the United States to all military and naval offenders then in durance. No doubt, a courtmartial would have acquitted the men, who, during their stay

on board the Ohio, had been released from their irons; and, in so far as they were concerned, we all sincerely rejoiced at the event; but we regretted extremely that the extension of the pardon indiscriminately to all should have enabled “Black 211 Jack” to escape the punishment he so richly deserved.

We were no sooner our own masters again, than there commenced on all sides a series of the most active preparations for a journey to the mines. The plan adopted was to form bands of three, five, or ten, under the leadership of one of the number, whose name the party took, and continued to be distinguished by. A set of written rules was drawn up for the regulation of the general interests, these rules varying in certain points, according to the peculiar views of particular associations. The purport of the majority of them, however, ran as follows:—

“We, the undersigned, hereby agree to form ourselves into a party, to be denominated —'s Mining Company, and to adhere to the following rules and regulations.

“1. That we shall each bear an equal share in all expenses incurred for the general advantage, such as the purchase of a yoke of oxen, a cart, horses, packs, &c.

“2. That we all proceed together to the gold mines, and that no man be allowed to 212 separate from the party without the general consent.

“3. That, in case of unavoidable separation, each person be allowed to take out an amount of goods or money equivalent to the original investment, less what he may have consumed or injured.

“4. That we work together in the mines, using the tools and property of the party in common.

“5. That each man be allowed to retain all he can make by digging, but that he shall contribute to the company his equal portion of the funds necessary for the purchase of food and other things for the common use.

“6. That in case of difficulty or danger, we stand by each other under all circumstances.

“7. That no sick man shall be abandoned, but every possible means adopted to restore him to health.

“8. That each man, in his turn, shall do his share of the general work, namely, cooking, attending to the horses, chopping wood, fetching water, &c.

“9. That any member separating himself 213 from the party without the general consent shall forfeit all that he has invested, unless such portion of it as the company may choose to award to him, to assist him in joining another party, or in seeking new ‘diggings.’

“10. That any man proved guilty of stealing from or robbing any member of his company shall be immediately expelled, and forfeit the whole of his property.”

Such is a correct outline of the kind of agreement by which the gold-hunters bound themselves, before proceeding to the mines. Some of these contracts were, however, somewhat at variance with the habits and practices of the contracting parties: one company, for instance, the members of which were distinguished for dishonesty and drunkenness, fully appreciating the advantages to a community of probity and sobriety, subscribed to two rules specially introduced; one of which was to the effect, that, at the close of each day's work, they should severally place the product of their labour in one common fund, to be afterwards divided into equal shares, 214 the periods of such division to be determined by the general consent of the company; and the second, that no spirituous liquors should be made use of by any of them, and that any member of the party found in a state of intoxication should be forthwith expelled.

In this particular instance, the rule relating to inebriety proved null in its effect, for, within three days after it had been subscribed to, four of the number were seen rolling in a state of intoxication about the town; with regard to the previous one, I can say nothing. I know that the party contrived to keep together till they reached the mines, but there, I subsequently ascertained, they quarrelled, separated, and were soon scattered.

Whilst our men were preparing for their departure, making purchases, packing provisions, and equipping themselves and their horses, the discovery of the body of one of our number cast a

deep gloom over our spirits. He was found at the bottom of a well, with a deep cut over his head, evidently inflicted by a sharp instrument. An accordion, on which 215 he was in the habit of playing, was also found in the well, on the top of his body, as if it had been cast in after it. We never ascertained the real cause of this murder, but strongly suspected it to have been either the result of an old grudge, or of a jealous paroxysm on the part of some of the Spaniards, with whom he had always been at variance, and involved in serious broils. I was much attached to him, and sincerely lamented his sad end.

In the midst of all this excitement, I myself felt undecided whether to travel towards the mines, or in an opposite direction. My predilections were strongly turned to South America, the climate being more suited to my sickly state of health; but being disappointed of a companion, I determined, after many days' delay, to set off for the mines. But by this time nearly all the parties had been formed, and I found myself almost alone, in a deserted town, where there were no means of living, no business, and from which, if I remained much longer, there would be no chance of escape.

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In this dilemma, I began looking up the stragglers; for, unless I succeeded in getting together a small party of my own, the only alternative left me would be the disagreeable and dangerous one of journeying alone. As may be imagined, the best men were already gone, and I therefore had to select such as I could find—an unfortunate circumstance for the kind of expedition I contemplated. However, I got together five individuals, who, consenting to my proposition, immediately subscribed to a code of regulations drawn up by myself, one of which was to the effect that all property, not purchased nor made use of avowedly for the common good, should be considered private, and respected accordingly.

The preliminaries being thus far arranged, my next step was to make the necessary purchases; but, to my great disappointment, oxen, horses, mules, carts, and in fact everything required for our expedition, had become scarce, and had increased inordinately in value; and, as our means were limited, this circumstance threatened to prove fatal to our 217 undertaking. Two hundred dollars were asked us for one yoke of oxen, which sum being too high for our exchequer, we declined the

offer, although the animals were certainly in fine working order; and we finally struck a bargain for another yoke and a cart, at the price of one hundred and fifty dollars. Both of our cattle had been used up by hard work, and were in bad condition, one of them being, moreover, blind of an eye; but it was our last resource, and, for want of better at the price, we took them, and I now only awaited the funding of the common stock of cash, to pay for them.

Meanwhile, I sought to procure a horse for my own particular convenience, but my entire stock of money did not exceed forty dollars, and a portion of this had to be set aside, as my share of the price of the yoke and cart. Whilst I was deliberating how to make the most of my small capital, a coloured man of Monterey came to see me, who chanced to have a horse to dispose of. But he wanted fifty dollars for it, and refused to take a cent less. I considered the bargain off, when, casting his eye on a handsome saddle which I had brought in parts from the lower country, and completed myself, he renewed his proposal, varied now by offering to let me have the animal for ten dollars and the saddle. To this arrangement I consented, on the condition of my approving of the steed, and we forthwith went out to look at him. A trial of his speed and action having satisfied me, the bargain was concluded in the most formal and legal manner before the Alcalde; and a paper was drawn up, setting forth the nature of the exchange, and describing the horse, his age—nearly, I suppose—his colour, peculiarities, and brand, and that the horse was the property of the seller at the time of the sale. My next step was to brand him again, on the hind-quarters, with a mark of my own; namely, a cross, seared with a red-hot iron ramrod.

These formalities and precautions are very necessary in California, where, horses being valuable, horse-stealing is considered almost a national virtue; for, spite of the severe pains and penalties against the offence, natives and foreigners disregard all notions of property in these animals, and never scruple to appropriate to themselves any they may find, or create an opportunity of catching. The brand, of course, renders them easy to be identified, in the event of their being met with again after they have once been taken away; though, in the course of horse-dealing, it is not at all unusual for a man to sell an animal which does not belong to him, and perhaps never did, leaving the unlucky purchaser to square accounts with the real owner, should the two chance to meet.

Halliday, another of our party, likewise succeeded in “making a trade” for a horse, or “swapping” for him, as the Yankees term the act of barter. He gave an epine watch and a few handsome articles of apparel which took the fancy of the Spaniard who made the exchange, and he went away chuckling over his bargain. His animal and mine were put up together in the school-house yard, and he 220 mounted guard over them for a couple of days, taking them out in the afternoon for exercise. On the third day, he went out a little way, at about four o'clock, and on his return, within half an hour after, discovered that his horse had been stolen. Mine was safe; and, as it was far superior to his, I could attribute the theft only to the Spaniard who had sold it to him, at what even Halliday thought a loss; or perhaps to one of the straggling volunteers, out of spite to Halliday, who was not a favourite with the men.

So much time having now been lost in preparation, I proposed that the members of my party should meet in my apartment, on a certain evening, for the purpose of paying over their respective shares to the common stock, in order to complete the purchase of our yoke and team. But, although every one agreed to meet, three of the party went that evening to Abrigos, and gambled away at *monté* every cent they possessed. We were thus left without sufficient funds to procure the means of transport; until Halliday, Parker, and 221 myself, putting our scanty treasuries together, purchased two more horses; one with a very sore back, the other spirited enough, but small, and unfitted for heavy burdens.

We were much embarrassed and very uneasy concerning our companions, whom we did not like to leave behind at Monterey, well knowing the privations and misery they would have to endure; therefore, and notwithstanding their improvidence, we determined to permit them to accompany us. One of them had already, I should state, left us, and set off after another party, then *en route*, with whom he succeeded in coming up, and reaching the mines.

Having manufactured pack-saddles, and bestowed away our month's provisions, our cooking utensils, and other necessities, and I having consented to allow my horse to be used for the pack of our two companions, the larger of the two other horses being reserved for a similar purpose, and the second as a resource, in case of a break down, we met, five in number, namely, Devin, Halliday,

Drew, 222 Parker, and myself, all well armed, and in capital spirits, and set off upon our hazardous journey in the evening, determined to walk the whole way, rather than fatigue our horses, whose strength we knew would be severely tried.

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## CHAPTER XI.

The first bivouac—A stranger—A traveller's wallet—My companions—Californian cow-catching—The stranger's exploits in horse-finding—Novel experiment in farriery—Slap-jacks—Our fresh horses claimed—I lose my steed—Misfortunes thicken—News of my horse—His sagacity—Our journey resumed.

As it was somewhat late when we set out—for we were resolved not to pass another night in Monterey—a march of some miles across the deep sands leading to the Salina plains brought us to a full stop at a very beautiful and thickly-wooded part of the road, where we determined to pass the night. We placed our arms, packs, and saddles, against the venerable trunk of a tree, the rich, overhanging foliage and branches of which promised to afford us ample shelter and protection from the heavy dews. On each side of the road arose lofty trees; and through the 224 long avenue of luxuriant vegetation we could discern, in the far distance, the low, white-washed houses of Monterey on the one hand, and on the other a succession of romantic hills.

As soon as we came to a halt, one of the party set to work to chop wood, and we soon had a blazing fire almost in the middle of the road; a second began roasting the coffee; a third went in search of water; whilst I proceeded to tether the horses in a convenient spot between our encampment and a lofty hill in our rear, where there was abundance of grass, and they might easily be watched. To boil the water, broil the dried beef, and grind the coffee—or pound it rather—between two large stones, it being first deposited in a bag, were duties soon performed; and we sate down to a meal, simple enough, in all conscience, but which was heartily relished around that cheerful blaze, the conversation being made up of conjectures as to the result of our adventurous expedition.



Night had long thrown its shadows around 225 us, and we were seated, each of us upon a log, chatting cozily around the fire, whose flickering glare cast a peculiar glow upon surrounding objects, when we suddenly heard the tramp of horses, and in the course of a few minutes a singular-looking individual presented himself in our midst. His figure and general appearance were wild in the extreme. He was a man below the middle height, dressed in a short jacket, partially covered with fur, his legs being encased in leathers, reaching to the knees, a costume adopted by the Californians to protect their *calcineros* on a long journey. He wore a fur cap, from beneath which his hair stuck out in bristles, and his countenance was far from prepossessing, his features being sharp, and his small grey eyes restless and inquisitive, with a peculiar look of shyness. By his side hung a cutlass, a weapon rarely used ashore, even in California, and which, taken in connexion with his strange aspect, tended to produce in our minds an unfavourable impression of his intentions, as we did not know but he might 226 be a scout belonging to some of the desperate bands that, as we had been given to understand, infested the neighbourhood of Monterey. This impression was somewhat confirmed by the fact of the second horse which he led being without a rider.

The stranger bade us good evening, as he alighted from his beast, a compliment which we of course returned. He at once discovered us to be Americans, by our accent, and informed us he could not speak English. I in turn ascertained—as he addressed us in a mixture of Spanish and French—that he was a Frenchman; and he confirmed my suspicions, proceeding to inform me how he came to be in our company.

He had been employed by a Mr. R—, at the mission of San Miguel, to take care of his cattle and horses during his absence at the mines. His employer had promised to be back in two months, or three at the most, and to pay him handsomely for his services; but he having absented himself beyond the stipulated period, and the Frenchman being 227 sadly in want of money, he had taken two horses, and set out in search of him, selecting for his companion a sailor of whom he knew little or nothing, and from whom he was ultimately obliged to separate, as he ate up the provisions and rode the horses nearly to death, teasing them sadly by rolling about on their back, as though he were

lying out on one of the yards of his ship. He got rid of him at Monterey, and resumed his journey alone. Our fire had attracted him, and he could not resist the temptation of joining company with us.

Having imparted this piece of information, without waiting for any invitation to join our party around the fire, he led away his horses to some little distance from us, where, removing their bridles and saddles, he fastened them by a hackamore to the tough branches of a tree, and, leaving them to feed off what they could pick up, returned to us, bringing back his saddles and a canvass bag, which he opened before us. It contained a quantity of *penoche*, which is, I believe, made of ground 228 Indian corn, and a little of which, mixed with cold water, makes a very refreshing drink; and a number of small boxes of salt, pepper, and coffee; a large bladder of lard—or Californian butter, as the Yankees jestingly call it; and, lastly, a quantity of broken biscuit, mixed up with bits of string, tow, thongs, and scraps of leather, a comb, a knife, and sundry other articles, too numerous to mention, but rather miscellaneous as an assortment.

He fumbled a good while in the second bag, until he produced a scrap of dirty and crumpled-up paper, which he handed me to read. It proved to be written agreement between him and his employer, and was intended, I suppose, as a sort of certificate of his good intentions. As we were well armed, we had nothing to fear, even had his purpose been mischievous; but we were so glad to have a new companion—especially one who possessed two horses—that no difficulty was raised to his becoming one of our party; and as he appeared equally glad of the chance of company, he accepted our invitation, and 229 proceeded to make himself comfortable, by stretching his macheers and an undressed sheepskin before the fire, on which he extended himself, forming a pillow of his saddle, and placing his cutlass by his side.

We were all stirring by daylight next morning, and were preparing breakfast, when some of the officers of the Ohio, who were on a shooting excursion, came up. They accepted of our hospitality, and bade us farewell with many kind wishes for our success.

The deep sand considerably impeded our progress, but the country generally was picturesque and pleasing, the land being alternately of the richest and of the barrenest description, now rising into

lofty hills, now stretching into plains, or sinking into deep valleys. We marched at the rate of not more than twenty miles a day, and I soon began to appreciate the character of my companions.

Halliday was a man of a strong constitution and powerful frame, and kept always in advance. Devin lagged behind, evincing a decided disinclination for our mode of travelling. Parker, who had the care of our horses, proved utterly unfit for his charge. Drew was all carelessness: and as for myself, I felt that my place ought to have been in a snug apartment, with abundance of food and repose, to qualify me for the fatiguing journey before me. Monsieur Frederic, our new companion, beat us all hollow in activity, in energy, in endurance, and in spirits, and we were heartily glad of his company.

As we advanced further into the interior, we were enabled to form some idea of the general character of the country. In most instances, the sides of the mountains are covered with plentiful crops of wild oats, but trees and water are scarce, being, in fact, the two chief deficiencies both of Upper and Lower California. It was only at intervals of from ten to twenty miles that we met with a few trees and a pond, or a stream, where we could obtain a little shelter from a broiling sun, and sufficient wood and water to establish a tolerable encampment.

On the Salina plains we saw innumerable herds of cattle, principally wild cows, with here and there a yet wilder-looking bull, which, pawing the ground and lowering his horns at our approach, simply out of bravado, would soon scamper off after his companions, already some distance a-head.

We encamped, the second night, in the neighbourhood of a *ranché*, where, upon procuring, after no small difficulty, a supply of fresh beef, we paid at the rate of a dollar for what was scarcely worth sixpence. As we were on the point of starting in the morning, a Spanish *ranchero*, of a very noble and dashing appearance, and mounted on a fine-spirited horse, came rattling up to us. Round the pommel of his saddle was cast one end of a lasso, ready for use; the other he kept swinging round and round his head, in such an artistical manner, that, as he surveyed us, I began to apprehend he had some design upon our cattle. However, he merely reined in his steed to salute us; and the next moment darted off, at full gallop, after one of the cows on the plain, which he noosed round

her 232 horns, and then permitted to run before him, dexterously guiding her towards a house in the distance, where, upon an Indian making his appearance, the poor creature was driven into an adjacent *correl*.

I had often enjoyed the advantage of seeing the lasso used by the Californians, and ever marvelled exceedingly at the dexterity and strength they exhibit in securing the very largest animal in the herd. Whatever its power, the lasso overcomes it; and it is really wonderful to witness the skill with which they adapt their movements and the action of their horses to those of the ensnared animal; now bringing it short up, half dead with fatigue—then, after allowing it to breathe again, giving it rope to scamper off to the end of its tether; driving it sometimes with marvellous swiftness in one direction, then permitting it to follow the bent of its own inclination in another, until the wearied animal becomes a mere plaything in their hands, and is either quietly secured, or as quietly allows itself to be driven into a shed.

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We passed the Salina plains, and came to a full stop at a place where three roads, or, more strictly speaking, pathways, branched off in different directions. We sought in vain for the track of a wagon, our sole resource in the absence of guides, and, lacking which, to find the right road was next to impossible. We halted, of necessity; and, after due consultation, despatched Halliday back across the plains to endeavour to procure the necessary information. On his return, he informed us that our route lay to the right, and in that direction accordingly we proceeded, notwithstanding the grumbling of our companions, who were now becoming clamorous, to be allowed to ride, for they vowed they could walk no further. Our horses were much in the same predicament; and I know not what we should have done but for Monsieur Frederic, who, coming to the rescue, assured them that, if they would only take courage, he would soon show them that he had not been living in California for nothing.

He was as good as his word; for, in the 234 course of another hour, during which time we had lost sight of him, he rejoined our party, leading a splendid-looking animal in a lasso. On inspection of it, however, we perceived a sore on its back of about one foot in extent; from which circumstances

I concluded that it had been ridden until it became useless, and was then abandoned. But Monsieur Frederic was off again; and, in the course of another half hour, returned with a second horse, in much the same plight as the first; nor did he appear at all annoyed at the reproaches that were cast upon him for bringing such sorry beasts to the rescue. On the contrary, he only laughed, and shook his head knowingly, and winked, and fumbled in his canvass-bag, till he fished up the bladder of lard, and a couple of cloths, on which he proceeded to spread a portion of the contents of the bladder. I call them cloths, but they were, in reality, two strips torn off from an old shirt: these, being duly prepared, he applied them to the sores on the animals' backs, binding over the tender place a longer strip of the 235 same material; and on each side of the backbone a convenient padding, tying over the whole a folded blanket. He then pointed to his veterinary achievement with a confident air; intimating, that if the beasts would not go now, the fault was none of his. And go they certainly did; marvellously, considering their condition. One of them was, in its way, quite a natural curiosity, being completely broken-winded, with a cough like an earthquake, and having a most uncomfortable knack of throwing his rider in a very singular manner. On such occasions, when he was once on his knees, it was excessively difficult to get him on his legs again in a strictly upright posture; and more than once I fancied we must prop him up for the sake of the rider. Altogether, I never beheld such a miserable cavalcade; with the exception of my own horse, we had not one sound animal amongst us.

We encamped that night on the summit of a steep ascent, where there were a few trees and some thick bushes. Near us grew an 236 abundance of wild oats, amongst which we turned our horses, having first relieved them of their packs and saddles; and, lighting our fire, search was made for water at a darklooking spot some short distance off, where we felt sure of finding a supply. It proved muddy, however; and we recommenced a long and anxious search, which fortunately terminated by our procuring a canfull of tolerable quality.

We had all lain down to sleep, except Monsieur Frederic, whose turn it was to watch; and I was dozing and dreaming, when his voice, as he indulged in a series of oaths in his native tongue, suddenly aroused me. I heard a plunging, and a wrestling, and trampling of hoofs, and sounds of blow, but without being able to discover the cause until I betook myself to the spot. By the light of

the fire, I beheld him flourishing his cutlass over one of the horses, which, every now and then, he struck with the flat side of the weapon, whilst the animal struggled desperately to get away from him. In a few 237 seconds, the creature became tolerably quiet; and, as I drew nearer, I observed that it had been lassoed by the Frenchman, who, now bringing it to the ground, proceeded to probe its foot. The poor thing had been limping painfully along the last day or two, and Frederic was determined to ease it against its setting out on the morrow's journey. He soon extracted a large pebble from the creature's foot, and, fumbling in his canvass-bag, produced a piece of stout leather, some cord, and a sail-maker's needle, by the help of which, and the exercise of some ingenuity, he succeeded in fixing upon the hoof a very fair substitute for a shoe: at any rate, it promised to afford the poor beast protection for a time from the sharp stones, and I do not know whether the horse or his master was the better pleased at the success of this novel experiment in farriery. I know the animal's pace over the sand was considerably improved by it, and that Monsieur Frederic got great praise for his cleverness.

Before we started next morning, we held a 238 consultation as to the best means of husbanding our resources in biscuit, the result of which was, that we agreed to convert a portion of our flour into "slap-jacks." This primitive substitute for bread is manufactured by mixing up some flour and water in a tin, seasoning with salt, and frying in a pan of grease. It is the Californian and Yankee travellers' grand resource when biscuit and beef fail; and, though some over-fastidious stomachs may turn at the bare notion of eating such an unpromising preparation, I can only wish them such appetites as are got by rough exercise and privation, to ensure their eating slap-jacks with extraordinary relish. Frederic, Halliday, and myself, set to work upon the "jacks," and soon tossed up a sufficiency for our purpose; breakfast was then despatched, cans of water obtained, our packs and saddles re-adjusted, and we resumed our route: not, however, without serious squabbles with our three other companions, who positively refused to lend any assistance in performing the necessary labour. But to 239 disagree would have led to separation; and, for various reasons, we resolved to submit to the temporary inconvenience their idleness subjected us to, in the hope of preserving the numerical strength of our party; a precaution highly necessary.

The country through which we were now proceeding did not differ greatly from those portions we had already traversed. The same deficiency of trees, the same profuse growth of wild oats of the tallest description, the same undulating landscape—now sand, now rich soil, but the latter rendered unfruitful in consequence of the scarcity of water, and unfitted for the residence of man. Occasionally we came to extensive plains, covered with numerous herds of wild cattle and horses, where the herbage was eaten so close to the ground as to leave the whole surface bare; but, as the animals presented a sleek appearance, we inferred that they roamed to considerable distances; and, having exhausted the pasturage in one district, repaired to others, guided by their unerring instincts. We were 240 ourselves frequently surprised, after ascending the rugged steep of some barren hill-side, to discover, on the other descent, a superabundance of the richest grass and wild oats, amongst which we never failed to turn our horses whilst we rested.

Our next encampment was in the immediate vicinity of an extensive and beautiful lake, the surface of which was undisturbed, save by myriads of wild geese, ducks, and other water-fowl, that, on our approach, started up in alarm; but, after fluttering about, settled down on another part of the watery expanse. We could easily have shot some, but powder was too valuable a commodity to waste, and we left them unmolested. Besides, the toolies grew so thick and tangled, and the soil was so boggy, it would have been almost impossible to secure our game without incurring extreme personal risk. To the right of us, to the left, and in the distance, arose a succession of hills, covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, their summits crowned with stately pine, and oak, and palms; whose 241 outline, standing out in relief against an unclouded sky, rendered them singularly prominent features in the landscape. Altogether, the spot was most charming, and we all contemplated it with delight.

We continued our route past the hills which skirted the lake, until we reached an extensive plain some seven miles in breadth, commencing at the base of a chain of enormous mountains, and terminating only with the horizon. We were stopped by encountering two paths—one leading to the right over the mountains, the other branching off across the plain; and we felt greatly perplexed which to choose. Whilst we were discussing the matter, we beheld a Californian galloping towards

us at full speed. This was an unexpected resource in our dilemma; and we all hailed the stranger's approach with satisfaction, save that Monsieur Frederic became very fidgety, and began looking about for some hiding-place for his horses. But there was no spot convenient for his purpose; so, making a virtue of necessity, he faced the new comer with a bold countenance.

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This individual, having saluted us in Spanish, fixed his eyes upon Frederic's horses, and asked where he had procured them. The reply was to the effect that they had been purchased by him at Monterey. The Spaniard, however, claimed them at once, asserting that he had left them behind on the road, whilst he pushed forward to his *ranché*; and, in proof of his assertion, proceeded to compare the brand on the animals with that of the horse he bestrode. As it happened, one of them was not branded; but, as there appeared to be no question as to the identity of the mark on the other—a fine beast, though extremely sore-backed—we thought it prudent as well as honest to give it up; which we accordingly did, notwithstanding our regret at losing so valuable an auxiliary. We ascertained that our road lay across the mountains, and parted from the *ranchéro* with many thanks for the information he had afforded us.

The Spaniard had not been gone more than half-an-hour, when my horse became restive, 243 in consequence of his being laden with two extra muskets, which galled his sides as he walked. Parker, a tall, raw-boned Yankee, was unable to hold him, and ere I could come to his assistance, the animal had broken away from him, and set off, galloping across the plain, soon dashing the two pack-saddles with which he was laden to the ground, together with the muskets, the original cause of the mischief. We set off in pursuit, but were soon compelled to relinquish the chase, and to attend to a more important matter, namely, the picking up our stock of provisions, which lay scattered about all over the plain, in the horse's track, and the several articles which had been shaken out of the packs. Whilst we were thus occupied, Halliday continued the hunt after my horse; until, night setting in, we lighted a fire, and sat down around it, awaiting his return. We found that one of the packsaddles was smashed to pieces; that only about a third of our stock of biscuit had been recovered; that our flour-bag had burst, and was half emptied of its precious 244 contents; and that various articles were irretrievably gone, for the scrub and brush were so thick as to baffle the



minutest search. Our muskets we found, as a matter of course, but we did not discover our crow-bar until the next morning.

Halliday returned to our encampment, or rather explored his way to it, guided by the light of our fire. He brought news of my horse, to the effect that it would probably be found at a *ranché* in the vicinity, belonging to one Don José. It appeared that, after a long and fruitless chase, he lost sight of the animal on the opposite side of the plain, and, looking about him, perceived a road which led him to a *ranché*. He made inquiry here, without at first procuring any information; until, having minutely described the lost beast, the *ranchéro* remembered that a neighbour of his, Don José, who lived at a *ranché* a few miles further on, had sold such a horse some time ago, and he doubted not but, finding itself near its former home, it had gone back to it. The polite *ranchéro* advised Halliday to return to our 245 encampment, and he would himself send to Don José, and request him to bring the horse to us in the morning, if his conjectures respecting it should prove correct. This advice he followed, and we anxiously looked forward for the dawn.

We were now compelled to remove our quarters, in consequence of the scarcity of wood; and, acting upon the suggestions of Monsieur Frederic, who seemed never at a loss, established ourselves on a part of the plain most frequented by the herds of wild cattle, whose dried manure supplied us with tolerable fuel, though it kept the watches busily employed collecting it, as it soon burnt out.

At about ten o'clock next morning a boy came up to us, leading my horse, which, as the *ranchéro* conjectured, had found its way back to its former master, Don Jose. We gave the lad some powder and a few percussion-caps, with which he was highly delighted, and were preparing for a fresh start, when we bethought ourselves that it would be as well to go to the 246 *ranchéro* whom Halliday had first seen, and inquire our way, he having forgotten to do so on the previous evening. Accordingly, we set off across the plain, and were directed to make for Don José's *ranché*, where we should learn further particulars. Don José's directions were somewhat peculiar, and did not appear altogether clear to us at the time. However, we replenished our canteens and bottles with some excellent water, and, thanking the Don, resumed our journey, until we reached another plain, at the outermost

verge of which stood a solitary tree—our goal. Towards it we advanced with renewed courage and increased speed; and, having at length come up to it, encamped there for the night.

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## CHAPTER XII.

An unpleasant intrusion—Indian horse-stealers—Cayotes—The road lost sight of—Our dilemma—Unexpected resource—Monsieur Frederic's canvass-bag—The ascent of the mountains—In luck's way—The right road at last—Symptoms of hasty travelling—Pueblos de San José—A resolution.

Our march next day proved a long one, although we made little progress in advance, as our route was circuitous, and finally obstructed by an immense lagoon, overgrown with toolies, or bulrushes, and along the borders of which we were compelled to proceed up to our knees in mud and water, and sometimes even higher. We came to the end of the marsh at last, but found ourselves so fatigued that further advance was impossible; we therefore selected a fitting spot, and made the usual preparations for passing the night there.

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Although excessively wearied, I was unable to compose myself to sleep, and lay half-sleeping, half-waking, watching the glimmer of the fire. Suddenly—about half-past one—I heard a low sound amongst the bushes, as a little distance off; and, listening more attentively, at last plainly distinguished foot-steps. We had adopted the precaution of sleeping a short distance from the fire; so that our movements were not easily discernible. I crept stealthily towards Halliday, having first grasped my pistols, which I always kept ready for use under my head, and with some difficulty succeeded in arousing him, desiring him to keep perfectly quiet, but on the alert. We were in such a position, at this time, as to command a view of our horses and property, which had been left under the care of a sentinel, Drew, who had fallen fast asleep, his head resting on one of the animals which had stretched itself on the ground by his side. We watched a few minutes, and then beheld two Indians stalk cautiously out from amongst the bushes, and advance towards our fire, 249 evidently to ascertain if any of us were stirring. The inspection proving satisfactory, as it seemed, one of them approached the sleeping sentinel, and cast a lasso around my horse's neck, whilst the

other laid his hands on one of the saddles and a pack. I took steady aim at the horse-stealer, and, discharging my pistol as he was on the point of leading the animal away, perceived that the ball took effect in the man's right shoulder, for he dropped the end of the lasso, and, carrying his hand to the wound, leaped up, and disappeared in the bush, his companion instantly following his example. The report of the weapon brought our comrades about us in a minute, in a state of great alarm, and all equally eager to ascertain the extent of the danger. The story was soon told, and our sentinel got severely rebuked, for there was little doubt but the Indians, tempted by the carelessness of our sentinel, intended to take advantage of it by stealing as much as they could carry off. Having adopted additional precautions in the event of a second surprise, we lay down again.

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But our troubles were not over, for several times we were obliged to get up and run after our horses, which, being tied up to the low bushes by leathern ropes, were set free by the *cayotes* — a species of animal something between a fox and a dog—that devour leather with avidity, and are ever on the watch to procure it. We lost several of these ropes, which are frequently converted into temporary bridles by passing them from the neck around the nose in an ingenious manner, completely obviating the use of head-stalls or bit. They are often of the handsomest description, and chiefly made of leather, which the *cayotes* nibble away in a very short time, ten minutes at most sufficing for them to entirely demolish the most solid of them. It may readily be imagined, therefore, that, between watching for *cayotes* and thieving Indians, our repose that night was not of the soundest kind, and that, when morning came, we were none of us much refreshed.

On reaching the base of the mountains I have already alluded to, we were exceedingly 251 perplexed, for here we lost all traces of the road. The wild oats grew in abundance, and proved a serious obstacle to our progress, for not only did they effectually obliterate all indications of the roads that passed through them, but they caught our horses' legs, and severely annoyed them. Once we believed we had hit upon the right track; but, after pursuing it for some distance, we came to a second exactly like it, and did not until then discover that they were formed by wild deer. To increase the discomfort of our position, our three indolent companions expressed their determination to follow one of these narrow paths which wound round the side of the declivity,

whilst we were of opinion that our better plan would be to prosecute our journey across the mountains, trusting to our knowledge of the direction of the mines, which we knew lay on the other side of the range. As we could not prevail upon them to accompany us, and it chanced that our horses and provisions were equally divided, we separated, each party continuing the road selected by the leader. Our 252 companions had not, however, proceeded more than two miles before they repented of their rashness; the path they had followed led down the mountain, and not up it: and as they were certain they must cross the chain, they thought it best to retrace their steps, which they accordingly did, coming up to us almost exhausted by the extra exertions their obstinacy had entailed upon them.

Wearily, too, did we mount the rugged slopes of those mountains, under a broiling sun, to which we were fully exposed, panting for water, and anxiously seeking for it, and for a few trees under which we might procure an hour's shelter and rest. But summit arose above summit in interminable succession, each appearing impassable, and, in our uncertainty as to our being in the right direction, offering additional obstacles to surmount, without the charm of hope to encourage us to persevere. Our poor horses likewise suffered intensely, and we were in constant fear of their falling down from sheer exhaustion. At length we attained the summit of another acclivity, where

#### ON THE ROAD TO THE MINES.

253 there were a few small trees, and under these we lay down, easing our animals of their burdens, that they also might rest awhile.

As we lay conversing upon the one absorbing topic, namely, the uncertainty of our being in the proper track, the Frenchman, who had been fumbling in his canvass-bag, drew out of it a pocket-compass, and asked me if it would serve us as a guide. This was indeed a resource; and, remembering the bearings of the mines to be N.N.W., we experienced little difficulty in ascertaining that we were journeying almost in a direct line towards them, although perhaps somewhat out of the regular track, as we had not yet come up with any signs of a beaten road. This discovery imparted fresh life to the party; and we set off again in capital spirits, notwithstanding we suffered so much from thirst.

A couple of hours' march up the sides of the mountains brought us to the summit of the loftiest, when the scene before us suddenly changed from a country bare of wood, to one where the oak, pine, and beech 254 flourished in primitive grandeur and abundance, the trunks of many being several yards in girth. The shade proved most grateful, and rendered our travelling, for several miles, almost agreeable, such a relief was it to be protected from the scorching rays of the sun.

We emerged upon a dangerous steep, the descent of which was extremely painful and difficult; the path—if it could be so called—being blocked up by large pieces of rock, stones, and pebbles. On each side of us were deep ravines, into which we would gladly have plunged for water, had there been any in them. But it was in vain that we peered into their depths in search of it; their beds were dry, although evidently the course of rapid torrents during the rainy season. As we proceeded, the country once more resumed its barren aspect, save that in the distance we could perceive high table-lands, apparently clothed with verdure, and stretching away on our right; whilst to our left, and beneath us, a gloomy plain undulated, on which not a 255 tree nor a patch of grass grew, to afford the least relief to the fatigued eye.

As the evening drew near, it became intensely cold, as is usual in this region, and the sudden change was far from pleasant, for it augmented our bodily discomforts. We sought for a convenient halting-place, as further progress was becoming impossible, and fixed upon a spot of ground near which we had observed a dark circle that led us to hope for water. Nor were we disappointed; for, notwithstanding it turned out to be a mere puddle, about ten feet wide and six inches deep, we were but too glad to slake our thirst at it, and to return thanks for this providential discovery. As for our poor horses, they were in a pitiable condition; and unless we had chanced to meet with this pool, we must have been under the necessity of abandoning them, as they must inevitably have dropped dead of thirst.

Another agreeable surprise awaited us at this spot, namely, the appearance of a herd of wild cattle, one of which Devin shot; so that 256 we managed to get up a tolerably handsome feast off fresh beef, and to put some by for the morrow's store. A cheerful supper wound up our day's perplexities and troubles, and, the watch being set, we lay down to sleep. We had not been long reposing, ere

we were awakened by a most terrific noise, which at first we had some difficulty in making out; but Monsieur Frederic soon set us at ease, by informing us that it proceeded from the wolves and prairie-dogs engaged in devouring the carcass of the cow we had killed, and the remains of which had been left on the spot where she was skinned. This was true enough; for in the morning we found nothing left of her save the bare skeleton, and a drove of hungry *cayotes* still lingering about it, that scarcely seemed disposed to move on our approach.

We felt greatly refreshed by our night's rest; and proceeded to replenish our canteens and bottles at the puddle, previously to setting out again. Our horses, too, appeared all the better, and we renewed our march, directing our steps by the compass.

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We had advanced several miles, when we perceived, on our right, but considerably out of our line of march, what we at once recognised as a waggon-track, and hurrying on, were not a little gratified to find that our surmises were correct, and that our compass had proved a true guide. We now regarded our difficulties as being at an end, especially when we observed a moving speck far a-head of us, which we could distinguish to be a team of oxen, advancing in the direction towards which we were ourselves journeying. A few miles further, and our conjectures were set entirely at rest; for we emerged upon a wide, level, and well-beaten road, bestrewn with fragments of carts, broken wheels, and other similar evidences of traffic, indicating the recent passage of a party bound for the mines.

That night we had plenty of good water, abundance of beef, a surplus of grass for our horses, good fuel, and a delightful resting-place, perfectly sheltered, and where we slept soundly. And thus we marched onwards, encountering every day additional evidences 258 not only of the traffic on that road, but of the haste with which the travellers journeyed towards their destination, some of them having left their logs still burning, or abandoned their broken-down horses, whose carcasses lay putrifying in the middle of the road, and tainting the atmosphere far and wide. The fires were to us a certain indication of the proximity of good water, and we therefore adopted it as a rule to encamp for the night on such spots as these, whether our day's journey had been long or short.

We were now close to Pueblo de San José; and, as I had by this time amply tested by experience the relative merits of my companions, I called Monsieur Frederic and Halliday aside, and informed them of my intention to separate from our three indolent comrades, whom we might leave behind at Pueblo, where they would have an excellent chance of either joining some other party, or where, if they preferred so doing, they might remain. We had done our duty by them, I considered, in bringing them from Monterey, after the 259 imprudent loss of their money, and they now must prove a heavy charge to us; so that I felt it to be the most prudent course to divide the party. With this understanding we discontinued the conversation, being resolved to take advantage of the first opportunity to bring about our project.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

Arrival at Pueblo de San José—Meeting with Volunteer officers—Sudden fortunes—An old friend under a new face—Description of Pueblo—A Yankee mill and miller—“Not to be done”—Bickerings—Break-up of the party—Continuation of the journey with one companion.

We arrived in sight of Pueblo de San José in the course of a few days; and although the distance from Monterey is only about ninety miles, yet it appeared to us much greater, from the difficult and painful nature of the route. To the left of the town runs a stream of water, about ten feet wide, which continues parallel with the road upon which we now stood. On its banks we perceived a *cavallard* of horses, a few of which appeared in good condition, but the rest were miserable, worn-out hacks. Close to it stood a couple of tents, and, approaching them, we found that 261 one was occupied by some volunteer officers from Pueblo de los Angeles, and the other by a Spaniard and his wife—a very fine, though somewhat masculine-looking woman.

It appeared that they were all resting here with their horses, in order to make a bold and continuous push for the mines. They had an immense advantage in possessing so many horses, for, when those they rode got tired, they could mount others, and thus proceed without delay. They had already travelled several hundred miles, and had been obliged to halt here, from utter inability to proceed

further without a few days' rest. The place was well wooded, and had an abundance of grass and water, so that we soon formed an encampment.

Our stock of flour having run short, we sent one of our party into the town, for the purpose of purchasing some. He soon returned with the information that the miller had none ready, there being an unusual demand for the article, and that we should have to wait until morning for it. Parker being 262 very much in want of shoes, he and I took a walk into the town in the evening, to inquire the price and purchase a pair, if we could find a good fit. We entered the shop of a German named Weaver, who had already realized more by the gold mania than any man in the surrounding country. He had been greatly embarrassed in his business, previous to the discovery of the mines, but had since engaged in a number of extensive speculations connected with the provision trade and dry goods, by which, in the course of a few months, he had realized an ample fortune.

In this store, to our great surprise, we found one of our old comrades of the volunteers rigged out in the sprucest manner, and looking more like a New York dandy than a shopman. He was receiving wages at the rate of one hundred dollars a month, no small improvement on his former condition. It seems that on the disbanding of the regiment he had purchased a mule and a supply of *serapas*, and with this stock in trade had made the best of his way to Pueblo. I know 263 not what success he had had peddling among the Spaniards, but, on his arrival at Pueblo, he was engaged as an assistant by Mr. Weaver, who required some one who could speak English in his store, in consequence of the enormous increase of his Yankee customers. We looked over a great number of ready-made shoes, the lowest priced at seven dollars a pair, but could not find any to fit.

Pueblo is a good-sized town, and contains about 4,000 inhabitants. It has all the evidence of being a thriving and progressive place, differing in this respect from all the other towns that I had hitherto seen in California. The buildings were constructed as much in the Yankee as in the Spanish style, a number of Mormons having come here at an early period, and built several hundred neat wooden houses and cottages, which formed a picturesque contrast to the heavy old *adobe* residences of the native inhabitants. This town is destined to become a place of very great importance. Being situated on the direct route to the gold mines, a trade had already 264 sprung up that promised to



enrich all who could procure merchandize. Two or three American boarding-houses had already been established, the proprietors of which were making money fast, the rate of payment exacted by them being extravagantly high; and the stores in which articles of wearing apparel were sold were continually filled with customers, the people here dressing more showily even than in Monterey. One of the points upon which male vanity piques itself here, is the wearing of the gaudiest-coloured linings in the *calcineros*, which, in order to display them, are left open from the knee downwards.

The Mexican laws were still maintained here as in Monterey; but the Alcalde was American, and matters seemed tolerably well regulated.

Pueblo is decidedly one of the prettiest towns in California, and, as regards both climate and cheerfulness of aspect, superior to any that I had as yet seen. Unlike all the others, it is situated upon level ground, and is 265 surrounded by plains, which are for the most part well covered with pasturage, and abundantly stocked with cattle.

In the morning, when we went to look after the flour, I was not a little surprised to find a Yankee mill, a Yankee miller, and a Yankee yoke of oxen, the latter having been brought across the mountains from the States. The miller, a tall, good-natured looking fellow, sold us the flour we required at a very reasonable price, and informed us, in answer to our inquiries, that his employer was making a rapid fortune, as there was a great demand for flour, and he had the best mill in the country. A saw-mill had also been recently erected in the neighbourhood, but, owing to a scarcity of water, or a negligence on the part of its proprietor, its operations had ceased, and all building was for the present suspended for want of boards and scantling.

As Parker and I were returning to camp, we stopped for a few moments at the officers' tent, just to say good evening. Here we found their Spanish friend, who seemed greatly 266 taken with my pistols, and who, as if to enhance the value of them in my estimation, proposed to exchange one of his best horses for them. But in this, as in a previous instance, I positively refused to part with them, and we returned towards our camp. Next morning Halliday, who had been looking after the horses, came in with the news that the Spaniard had said to him, that he would be willing to double the

price he had offered. Now, I was greatly attached to these weapons, and had intended carrying them back with me to the States, as a *souvenir* of my campaigns, but it seemed as if fate was determined that I should not gratify so simple a desire. Every man I met seemed to eye them with envy, and to consider by what means he could transfer them from my possession to his. I therefore thought it useless to resist much longer, and accordingly went with Halliday to the Spaniard's *cavallard*. The latter offered me a couple of horses for them, but, although good ones, they were very thin and had evidently been ridden very hard. I 267 refused the exchange, but declared that if he would allow me to choose from amongst the animals, the pistols were his. This he agreed to, on condition that I should only select one; so, casting my eyes around, I picked out a jet black steed, of silken coat and exquisite symmetry. We immediately lassoed him, in order the better to examine him, and fortunately discovered that he was dead lame. Congratulating myself that I had not made the exchange, I bade the Spaniard good morning, and returned to my quarters.

Our encampment was picturesquely enough situated beneath the spreading arms of a huge tree, and shut in on every side by masses of foliage, which hid the town and the road from our sight. Monsieur Frederic and I occupied ourselves in chopping wood with our axes, and Halliday looked after the horses. Drew and Devin were entrusted with the alimentation of the fire, and the preparation of the coffee. On our return, we found these interesting youths stretched on the turf, apparently unconscious that they had any 268 duties to perform, and as soon as Halliday made his appearance, they commenced a tirade against him about their supper.

“What a humbug you are,” said Mr. Drew, “to be amusing yourself strolling about, when you ought to be grinding the coffee! At this rate, we shan't have supper till nine.”

“Halliday always sneaks away when there is anything to be done,” quoth Mr. Devin.

“You are unjust,” replied Halliday, indignantly; “I am always to contribute to the comfort of the party. I was the last to grind the coffee, and the last but one to make the fire. Besides, I have been looking after the horses.”

“Now, boys,” said I, thinking this a fitting opportunity for the execution of my project, “I must have my say in this matter. When we first formed ourselves into a party, I had hoped that the circumstances in which we were placed, and the object which we had in view, would have taught us the necessity of forbearance and mutual reliance; but the jealous and angry feelings that have marked our 269 progress thus far, and the little probability that I see before us of a better understanding, have forced me to a conclusion, at which I have most unwillingly arrived, that we are but ill adapted to travel as a company, and that we shall best consult our interests by separating at once.”

After some discussion, in which a good deal of unpleasant feeling was exhibited, the suggestion was ultimately agreed to, and we broke up into two parties, the one consisting of Drew, Devin, and Parker, and the other, of Halliday, Frederic, and myself.

It now remained to be seen which of us would get to the mines first; and in order to lose no time, I and my two companions started at an early hour on the following morning, leaving our quondam friends in the enjoyment of their slumbers. My horse being large and strong was packed with the provisions; the two spare animals, Frederic's lame horse which had long since worn off its leather shoe, and the broken-down Rosinante formerly ridden by Devin, being too completely “used up” to 270 be of much further service. My companions mounted them, nevertheless, and I accompanied them on foot, although worn out by constant fatigue. We passed through the town, and then pursued a road which branched off to the right. We had not proceeded far, when I became quite faint and ill, and Frederic, having some bowels of compassion, immediately dismounted, and told me to get up in his place, saying that he could ride one of the other animals. But this he found impossible, for the poor beast broke down a few miles further, and he was obliged to walk. Not appearing to relish this, I proposed to resign to him the horse I was riding, and he was glad enough to accept it. I again tried to pursue my way on foot, but found it impossible to proceed.

Monsieur Frederic now observed that he feared we should never get on to the mines under the circumstances; that he had a friend living at a *ranché* in the neighbourhood, and that he thought it advisable to go to him and recruit both himself and his horses. I replied 271 that if he had made up

his mind to quit us, we would give him a third of the provisions in consideration of his leaving the worst of the horses with us, as we might be able to use him for our reduced pack. He seemed very well pleased with the arrangement, and we accordingly undid the pack on the plain, and gave him as liberal a proportion of our stores as we could afford. Bidding us farewell, he struck off to the left from the regular road, and was soon lost in the distant woods.

I was now left with only one companion, and that close to that stage of the route where travellers begin to anticipate the greatest difficulties, for here they pass the last regular town to be met on the way northward.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

A faint heart—Second thoughts—Mission of San José—Effects of Mexican apathy—“Ugly customers”—The road again—A comfortless prospect—Meeting with Governor Mason—Indian villages—An extinguisher upon sentiment—Arrival at Livermore's farm—Effects of a bad reputation—Road-side adventure—The San Joachin Valley—Junction with a Monterey convoy.

The road now branched off into two different directions, the one leading to San Francisco, and the other to the mines. We turned our backs upon the former; when, after proceeding some little distance, my companion, who had been riding for some time in silence, affected no doubt by a sense of isolation and the difficulties that presented themselves to his imagination, suddenly observed to me—

“I don't like the appearance of the road; the country around seems to be getting more 273 barren and gloomy at every step. When I consider how poorly we are provided for wintering in the mountains, and the long journey that we have yet before us, I am inclined to think that we had better give up all idea of gold digging, and start at once for San Francisco.”

“To become the laughingstock of such of our old comrades as might chance to be thrown in our way. No, no, Halliday; we must not be so easily diverted from our purpose. It is a point of honour

with me to proceed, until something really does-occur, to justify me to my own conscience for abandoning it. Besides, I want to show those youths we have left behind that we can get along without them. Cheer up, and reflect better on it. It is obviously the more prudent course for us to proceed to the mines. San Francisco must be at present completely deserted; but, even were it otherwise, I should like to know what employment we could possibly find there? On the other hand, I have little doubt that we shall not be many days at the mines <sup>274</sup> before we shall have obtained sufficient gold to purchase ourselves a tent, and pay all current expenses. No, we had better persevere, and trust to Providence to aid us.”

“Perhaps you are right,” replied Halliday gloomily; “but, I must own, our prospects are anything but cheering.”

The scene was certainly but ill calculated to sustain one's spirits. We were now in the midst of a large plain, scantily covered with vegetation, and unprotected by any sort of foliage. A cold and piercing wind swept over it from time to time, betokening the near approach of winter. We had not proceeded above a mile after the above conversation, when the sore-backed horse fell with the pack, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could get him on his legs again.

“You see,” said my companion, fortified in his forebodings by this little incident, “how impossible it is for us to proceed further on this route; neither our horses nor ourselves can stand it. Let us turn back, and proceed to San Francisco.”

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“Be it so,” was my reply; “you know that I cannot travel alone, so that I must make up my mind to take whichever direction pleases you.”

We accordingly turned back, but had not proceeded many steps, when my vacillating companion, rendered still more doubtful of the prudence of his suggestion by the easiness of his victory over me, suddenly stopped short and exclaimed—

“You must think me very weak-minded, but, after all, I cannot help coming round to your opinion. Let us go to the mines. It is worth the risk.”

Towards the mines then our horses' heads were again turned. Our pack had been thoroughly arranged, so as to give the poor animal that bore it as little pain as possible. He got along better than we had expected, but we were every now and then obliged to lash him from behind with our whips, to keep him alive. As we proceeded, the numbers of dead horses and mules that we found scattered about on the route had quite a depressing effect on our spirits, and I could see by Halliday's lengthened visage that, only for the shame which he felt at changing his mind so often, he would have again suggested the prudence of retracing our steps.

Towards evening, we came in sight of the mission of San José, which is situated upon some hills overlooking an immense plain, dotted here and there with cattle. Viewed at a distance from the road, it appeared in excellent repair, and the large out-offices, with their tile roofs, contrasted prettily with the high trees that rose above the long *adobe* wall that seemed to form the enclosure of the establishment. Turning, however, to our right, we found that we had only seen one end of the mission, and that this wall did not stretch across the front. To our surprise, everything connected with the establishment seemed to be in a state of the most deplorable decay. The *corps de logis* contained a suite of spacious and lofty rooms, with a large piazza in front. The façade itself had once been white-washed, but the dark tint of the *adobe* had gradually pierced through the lime, giving the walls a sober hue, which added greatly to the ancient and venerable appearance of the building. A little further on, on the road, and adjoining this part of the mission, stood the remains of an immense number of small rooms, very regularly laid out, which were formerly occupied by the Indians connected with it. Very few of these apartments have any covering, the materials of which the roof was composed having been long since torn away for other purposes. On the opposite side of the road are several comfortable *adobe* houses, and adjoining them we discovered a basin about ten feet square, and plastered with cement on the inside, which had been supplied by artificial means with water from a hot spring in the neighbourhood, and must have formed a most luxurious bath for the use of the priests. On entering the interior of the mission,

we found an immense courtyard, surrounded with sufficient stabling for the accommodation of several hundred horses. The church is about forty feet long by thirty wide, and of 278 the simplest possible construction. At the rear of these buildings lies a neglected orchard and garden, which had once been exceedingly productive. In short, the general plan of this immense establishment bore evidence to its having been at one time a well organized and comfortable place, supplied in profusion with all the necessities, and even luxuries, of life. It is now only a standing reproach to the Mexican government, and the lazy successors of the Jesuits.

The population of the mission consists of about three hundred persons, the majority of whom are Indians, and no small proportion Americans, all of whom are evidently of the most depraved and abandoned habits. From the specimen which I saw of them standing half drunk at the entrance of a grog-store into which part of the buildings had been converted, I took care to look at the priming of my pistols, and to keep a close watch on our horses. The Indians are almost black, and have the usual characteristics of long, neglected hair flowing in tangled locks about their 279 shoulders, flat noses, thick lips, low foreheads, and bushy eyebrows, an appearance in perfect keeping with their mental characteristics, which do not elevate them above the condition of the brute. The Americans whom I saw were a hard-looking set of customers, who seemed to have been long out of the pale of civilization; and I must confess that they inspired myself and my companion with some degree of apprehension.

We had no money with us of any consequence; but our horses, saddles, arms, and a few other articles in our possession, were sufficient temptations for an attack upon us, every kind of property having risen enormously in value, in consequence of the immense influx of foreigners that had taken place since the discovery of the gold mines. Horses that could formerly have been purchased for three or four dollars now readily brought from one hundred and fifty to two hundred, and weapons of defence could with difficulty be procured for money. As to blankets and *serapas*, which served the double purpose of beds by 280 night and cloaks by day, they fetched almost fabulous prices.

With the knowledge of these facts, and an *entourage* that was far from reassuring, we felt that we should be safer on the road than at the mission. We accordingly purchased some corn for our horses, and proceeded on our route. A few miles further on, we found ourselves between lofty hills, those to the right being covered with wild oats, whilst on the left everything looked black and dreary, all traces of vegetation having been burned up by the Indians, who sometimes adopted this method of annoying the Yankee traveller.

On arriving at a sort of hollow, filled with water, which lay opposite a narrow and fertile valley, shut in by a couple of hills, we dismounted, and prepared to encamp, there being plenty of grass for our horses, who could roam about without being picketed. On glancing at one of the most abrupt and loftiest of the precipices by which we were surrounded, I observed some cows browsing, at an immense height, on the sides of a declivity so steep

#### ON THE ROAD TO THE MINES—ENCAMPING FOR THE NIGHT.

281 that no human being could have stood upon them for five minutes without becoming giddy. But these animals, owing to a frequent scarcity of food in the valleys, are habituated to seek it on these dizzy eminences, which contain some spots of rich pasturage.

Our encampment this evening was cold and cheerless, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane. Sweeping along the road for some distance, it became obstructed by the hills in front of us, and, winding round the valley, spent itself on our devoted heads. Having vainly sought about for wood, we were compelled to make the best fire we could, of dried manure. We then pounded our coffee, and a good warm cup of this refreshing beverage restored us to some little sense of comfort. We had just finished arranging our blankets and muskets, on a gentle descent near our fire, when we observed a small party moving along the road. It was composed of three persons, two riding in advance, and the third driving a mule and small cart, of Yankee construction.

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“It is Governor Mason, as I live!” exclaimed Halliday, jumping to his feet. “I must go and speak to him. He is on his return from the mines, and may bring us some news.”



I was too much fatigued to accompany my comrade, but nevertheless awaited his return with interest. He only remained absent a few minutes.

“It was the Colonel, sure enough,” said he. “I asked him how matters were going on at the mines, and he told me that, although there were a great many privations and hardships to endure, an industrious fellow, in the possession of good health, could make plenty of money by digging. To my inquiries whether, in case he should not succeed at this work, he had a chance of obtaining any other sort of employment, his answer was equally encouraging.”

“Well, I hope you are at last satisfied,” I rejoined. “I told you all that before; but it seems nothing but the assurances of the Governor himself can bring conviction home to your mind. I hope that this is the last time 283 that I shall hear anything more of your doubts and indecision.”

My companion, somewhat piqued at my remark, laid himself sulkily down on his blanket, and soon fell asleep.

As Colonel Mason's name has been mentioned, I may be permitted to introduce here a slight sketch of a man whose position has brought him into notoriety, and rendered him an authority but too frequently quoted on the extent and nature of the resources of the country placed under his jurisdiction.

In person the Colonel is tall, with very coarse features, light hair, and rough and unpolished manners. He is one of those men who mistake rudeness for decision, and who look upon the courtesies and amenities of life as incompatible with the character of a soldier. I believe that he has many good qualities, amongst which is a love of order and justice; but the very nature of his profession seems to have contracted his views, and rendered them by far too despotic and unconciliatory for the difficult position in which 284 he was placed. The person chosen for the governorship of California, at this period, should have been not merely a soldier, but a man possessed of some statesmanlike qualities—one, in short, who could have thrown oil upon the troubled waters, in the absence of effectual civil law; whilst, on the contrary, every step taken by

this gentleman invariably gave rise to dissatisfaction and discontent, and, in the end, to complete anarchy.

A new country has as much need as an old one of able and high principled men in the executive department; and, had those who first exerted American influence on this peninsula combined the requisite qualifications, an immense amount of injustice would have been prevented, and a course of policy avoided which has tended greatly to lower the character of the home Government. In fact, so sick were the inhabitants of the country at this period of military rule, that almost every spark of patriotism and attachment to the flag of the United States had been extinguished in the breasts of the settlers.

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During the night, the hills resounded with the shouts of drunken Indians, and we deemed it prudent to keep watch alternately over the horses. Proceeding on our journey next morning, we soon came in sight of an Indian village, the houses of which were of a conical form, and constructed of mud and dead foliage. The entrance consisted of a low hole near the foundation, through which the inmates are obliged to creep. These huts bore a close resemblance to beehives; so closely packed were they with swarms of half-naked Indians, who seemed to have scarcely room to turn in them. There being little here to invite the attention of the traveller, we passed on, and soon came to a larger village, built in somewhat a different style, and having a much more picturesque character.

The houses were, for the most part, constructed of wood in its unplanned state, and, in some instances, still covered with the bark. Few of these habitations reached a greater elevation than the height of an ordinary man, and the entrances were, as usual, mere holes. 286 Forming a pretty background to this little group, stood a cluster of stately pines and palm-trees; while in front lay a gently undulating and fertile plain, dotted with cattle, and surrounded with charming hills, richly clothed with vegetation. I was so enchanted with the romantic beauty of the spot, that I could not refrain from giving expression to my feelings; but Halliday, who was of that dull and unimaginative mould so simply but naturally described by Wordsworth— “Nature ne'er could find the way Into

the heart of Peter Bell; In vain, through every changeful year, Did Nature lead him as before; A primrose by a river's brim A yellow primrose was to him, And it was *nothing more*"—

killed all my enthusiasm by the remark, that "it was very pretty, but that a good beefsteak, smothered in onions, would add immensely to the effect." These Indians were, however, miserably poor; and all we could obtain from them was a little *pinoli*, 287 which, being put into a cup of water, formed a most grateful and refreshing beverage.

The next stage to Livermore's farm was exceedingly tedious. We were lucky enough, however, to reach it before night; and we encamped within a mile of the house, close to the wooden fence which encloses the ground where the horses are allowed to run. The owner of this farm had settled early in the country, and had obtained possession of immense tracts of land, which, however, as far as I could judge, at this season of the year, were more remarkable for quantity than quality. Obtaining permission to picket our horses inside the fence, we set to work to collect as much grass and straw as possible for them. This, however, proved to be anything but an easy task, and our poor animals made but a sorry meal of it. We fared better, my companion having succeeded in purchasing some beef at the house. He had some difficulty, at first, in obtaining it, owing, as he presumed, to the annoyances to which the family were subjected by the visits of the 288 numerous travellers journeying along this route to the mines. Mr. Livermore told him that he felt great pleasure in affording his countrymen every facility while they conducted themselves properly; but that, in many instances, they had wantonly done great injury to his farm. He inquired where we were going to encamp; and, on finding that we had located ourselves near the fence, expressed a hope that we would not take any of the stakes for fuel, as they had been cut and sunk at considerable expense. We were determined to leave a better reputation behind us than our predecessors, and, though sorely pushed for it, left the palings untouched. We managed, at length, to build up a tolerable fire; and a shallow stream, which skirted the road, supplying us with excellent water, we were, on the whole, far from being objects of compassion.

Whilst we were at supper, a couple of horsemen rode up to us, whose appearance, on a more isolated part of the road, would have been calculated to greatly disquiet us. 289 They were armed

*cap-à-pie* with leathern coats, leather breeches, rifles, pistols, and long knives, this formidable panoply being surmounted by fierce and sinister-looking countenances, garnished with long, tangled beards.

“Good night, strangers,” said the foremost, pulling up his horse.

“Good night,” returned I, without appearing to divert my attention from the agreeable masticatory process in which I was engaged. I had already taken the measure of these worthies long before they came up, and wished to avoid letting them see with how much apprehension their appearance had inspired us.

“How far is it to Bob Livermore's farm?”

“About a mile.”

They were turning their horses' heads to our great contentment, when the spokesman said:—

“You're goin' to the mines, I guess?”

“Yes,” said I, “we are bound for the Stanislaus mine.”

“Have *you* been there?” inquired Halliday.

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“Well, I *ray* ther guess we have.”

“What luck had you?”

“Darned little; we mad jist enough to pay our way along the road.”

“What chance do you think we'll have?”

“Well, I guess you'll have chances enough, but darned few sartainties. Unless you keep your eyes skinned, and sleep without winking, they'll steal the very nose off your face.”

“How are they off for provender for the horses?”

“There ain't a blade of grass in the whole darned country. If it warn't that this here tarnal critter of mine managed to live upon acorns and rotten stone, I guess as how he'd a been a gonner some weeks ago. But don't let this scar ye, strangers, for there's mountains of goold if you can only get at it. Good night, my trumps; I wish you luck.”

With these agreeable assurances, which seemed to produce their due effect upon Halliday, the spokesman rode off and rejoined his companion.

Travelling rapidly next day, we arrived 291 towards evening at a good encampment, where there was plenty of wood and water; and, on the following day, we found ourselves in the San Joachin valley. We had proceeded a considerable distance on the plain, when we perceived several waggons in advance. They appeared to belong to a numerous party, and were accompanied by a large *cavallard*. They were going at an easy, steady pace, and we entertained hopes of being able soon to overtake them. My companions' eyes beamed with joy at this agreeable sight, for he only desired an opportunity of putting his talents and effrontery to account, in order to render our mode of travelling more easy and comfortable. Pushing on before me, he came up with the party; and, when I overtook them near a small lake surrounded with bulrushes, I found him paying compliments to a dry-looking little Spaniard, who held a couple of dead geese, that he had just killed, slung on the barrel of a fowling-piece which he had on his shoulder. The place being favourable for an encampment, we were glad enough to halt 292 here for the night with our new acquaintances, the society of human beings always a treat in these wilds.

Halliday was not long before he had made himself acquainted with the names and circumstances of all the party. The little sportsman, into whose good graces he had wormed himself, was Don Emanuel, of Monterey, a gentleman of property, who was now on a trading expedition to the mines,

and having with him a large stock of dried beef, flour, biscuit, sugar, coffee, &c., besides troops of cows and horses. Outside the waggons that contained the former articles, and which were packed to the very top, might be seen tied to the poles crow-bars, picks, wash-bowls of wood and tin, and other implements used in mining. These waggons were accompanied and guarded by four or five Californians, and the same number of Indians; the latter, of course, being employed for the more laborious kinds of work.

We were no less surprised than pleased at finding amongst the party several of our old 293 acquaintances from Lower California, one of them, Señor Edouard D—, being the father of a dark-eyed *señorita*, who had left some tender *souvenirs* in my unsentimental friend Halliday's heart. Whether it was the memory of these love-passages, or the savoury odour of the wild geese that had been killed on the lake, that attracted the latter from our evening meal, I cannot take upon myself to say; but certain it was, that he left me to munch in solitude my supper of tough biscuit; for I was too much fatigued to cook anything more elaborate. I was resolved, however, to make up a good fire, and accordingly went over to the larger encampment to borrow an axe for the purpose of chopping some wood. I had scarcely, however, set foot within its precincts when I was seized by the leg by one of those huge dogs that generally accompany every party of the natives; and, on crying out for assistance, I was set upon by a number of others, whom I found it difficult enough to keep off, until some of the Spaniards came to my assistance. These dogs, 294 as I have before observed, are a perfect nuisance; but they are an excellent watch, and are far more trustworthy, as night sentinels, than men tired out by the fatigues of the day.

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## CHAPTER XV.

The San Joachin—The ford—Exorbitant ferryage—Halliday's ingenious contrivance for crossing—A prairie on fire—The Stanislaus river—Almost lost again—Indian Salmon-fishery—A return party—Tobacco at a premium—The Stanislaus mine.

We now continued our journey with the party of Don Emanuel; a great convenience to us, as, through his kindness, we were enabled to place our horses, with his, under the care of the Indians, who kept a vigilant watch over them at each successive encampment. Our party, however, did not trespass so far upon the Don's as to be confounded with it. We kept so far distinct from it as to build a separate fire and perform our culinary operations for ourselves; but if we wanted an axe, a pan, or a log of wood, our friend's party proved a never-failing resource on such an emergency, and we considered it a fortunate circumstance that we had overtaken them. We enjoyed the advantages of companionship and protection, heightened by the interchange of those trifling acts of courtesy and kindness which render intercourse with our fellow-beings pleasing, and which, though even trivial in themselves, are appreciated tenfold in such a position as we all stood in, with regard to each other, our projects, our chances, and our difficulties.

The next day we reached the banks of the San Joachin river, into which those tributary streams discharge themselves, that divide the various "diggins" or portions of the country where gold is found in the greatest abundance.

On our right and left we beheld stretching out as far as we could see plains covered with the richest and tallest grass; and it appeared to me, at the time, that this locality, being about the most fertile in California, was the best adapted for settlement; but I have since been informed, that fever and ague prevail everywhere along the banks of the river to such an extent as to render any attempt to settle here tantamount to deliberate and determined suicide.

I could not contemplate without interest the passage across the stream which so many thousands had already hazarded in their eager pursuit after gold. It was denoted by a small house constructed of toolies or bulrushes, which stood within a few yards of the water, and was just large enough to serve for the residence of the two Yankees who had established themselves here on speculation. There was only one boat on the river, and that one too small to transport more than five men in safety across to the opposite bank, and quite insufficient for us. If we could have succeeded in coming to terms with the ferryman, we should not perhaps have thought of any other means of traversing the stream, but contrived to accommodate ourselves to the circumstances. The charge,

however, for the passage of each person, was one dollar; too high for our scanty means. Don Emanuel 298 endeavoured to strike a bargain for the transport of his waggons and cattle, but the demand was so enormous, that he hesitated and turned about to consult with us what was best to be done to meet the exigencies of the case. After a lengthy consultation, and after the consideration and rejection of numerous plans, Halliday suggested one which was adopted, and measures were instantly set on foot for carrying it into effect.

The Indians of the party were despatched to hunt up the banks of the river for toolies. Of these, they collected as many as were necessary for the purpose, conveying them to the bar of the stream, where we all set to work to tie them up in large bundles of equal size, in as compact a form and as tightly as possible. Some five or six of these bundles being prepared, they were strongly bound together, side by side, by means of a few long pieces of raw hide, so that they assumed the form of a boat or raft. These were next launched upon the water, and some of the planks, taken out of the waggons, 299 placed on the top; a man furnished with a long pole taking up a convenient position, so as to push the raft across without difficulty. In the course of a couple of hours, the whole of these arrangements were completed, the waggons unladen, and their contents successfully conveyed to the opposite side; greatly to the mortification of the ferrymen.

Those who had horses prepared to ford the stream at the point or bar selected by the Indians as the safest for the mules and cattle. I may state that, even at this point and at low water, the San Joachin is extremely dangerous; and that, when it is at the shallowest—as it was at this time—a false step may precipitate the traveller and his steed into deep and rapid water, leaving him no resource save that of swimming for his life.

I lent Halliday my horse, which stood a span or two higher than his own, and he proceeded to ride across, but had scarcely got half way over, having kept pretty well on the 300 bar, when the animal sank into the water, and he was compelled to return. I contented myself with being less adventurous, and humbly followed close in the track of the mules and the Indians, getting over in perfect safety and not much wetted; although my horse shivered exceedingly, the cold being so severe. Halliday came over the same way, and there remained but the waggons and the cattle. The



former were drawn along the bar with extreme difficulty, and the latter also gave much trouble, notwithstanding the assistance of the most experienced horsemen of the party. Some of them, having got partly over, turned tail and scampered back; others persisted in floating down the stream; some remained stationary, shivering in the water, and all were averse to encounter the cold; nor did we succeed in getting them across at last, but at a great expense of time and labour. As it was, one of the cows got into deep water, and was drowned, the carcase floating down until its further descent was happily arrested by a projecting portion 301 of the embankment, at which point it was recovered by our toolie raft, and eventually served us for a repast. The excitement of this scene was extraordinary; and the peaceful echoes of the neighbourhood had never, I venture to say, been disturbed before by such shouting, and screaming, and swearing. At length we all sate down, thoroughly fatigued; and, having selected a fitting spot, determined to rest there until the morrow.

The San Joachin is a beautiful stream, extremely rapid, and, at times, rising to an extraordinary height, although its waters were now shallow. Its breadth averages fifty feet, and its banks are overshadowed with stately trees and a variety of plants and shrubs; the river itself abounding with fish, particularly a kind of salmon, on which, in many places, the natives almost entirely subsist.

On the side where we now were the bush and brushwood grew luxuriantly; and in several secluded and shady spots we discovered a great many Indians, half clad, half starved, and very dirty, stretched upon the 302 ground half asleep. We felt suspicious of their honesty, and, being resolved not to put it to the test, kept a sharp look-out all night, and sustained no loss.

We started off again early next morning, and, in the course of that day's march, came upon a large prairie fire, which burned with extraordinary rapidity and fierceness, menacing soon to stop our progress. Fortunately, our road was quite bare of grass; and, owing to this circumstance, the flames could not spread across it.

This was the first time I had ever witnessed such a spectacle, and certainly it was wonderfully grand and appalling. The flames devoured every blade of grass in their way, roaring, and crackling, and

leaping from side to side according to the varying direction of every fitful gust that blew, the smoke ascending in dense volumes, and forming quite a cloud above the scene of the terrific devastation.

Fires of this kind, amongst the long grass and wild oats, are not unfrequent in

#### ON THE ROAD TO THE MINES—BURNING TREES FOR A CAMP-FIRE.

303 California; and, in the midst of the summer, when the vegetation is parched by the broiling sun, they often burn furiously during many days, only subsiding when they have exhausted all aliment.

We passed the fire, and soon reached the Stanislaus river, which takes its rise near the Californian range of mountains, and discharges itself into the San Joachin, than which it is not less beautifully wooded, nor its banks less picturesque. We were on its north side, and anxiously looked about us for some means of conveying ourselves, our waggons, and our cattle across.

This proved no easy matter; and we travelled many wearisome miles, without any regular road, and where the briars and bushes offered innumerable obstructions to the progress of the waggons and mules, adding to the natural difficulties of the ground, which was very uneven, and bestrewed with broken limbs of trees.

Halliday had requested me to take charge of his horse, whilst he assisted Don Emanuel 304 along the road. This I willingly did; and, perceiving shortly afterwards a convenient descent to the brink of the river, where I could afford it and the one I rode an opportunity of slaking their thirst, I led them down and allowed them to drink until they appeared satisfied. On clambering up the bank of the river again, I found no traces of my companions; but, judging that they would continue along the water-side, I pursued my way for a couple of miles, until I came to a spot where the water was very shallow, offering, through an opening in the banks on both sides, a convenient passage for a waggon. Here then I paused awhile, then dashed over, and, ascending the opposite path, soon found myself entering on a vast plain, on which there were no signs of my party visible. Nevertheless, I pursued the indistinct path before me, until it altogether disappeared, when I thought it prudent to retrace my steps to the spot from which I had first started on the opposite side, supposing that my friends might have discovered a yet more convenient 305 crossing-place. I galloped forward

along the bank, until I came to the ledge of a precipice overlooking the river, and which seemed to continue for several miles straight onwards; but, as I perceived no track of travellers, nor any sign of another ford, I made up my mind to recross the river for the last time, and, risking consequences, to pursue the track I had discovered. This I accordingly did, travelling onwards in much perplexity and anxiety of mind, until I fell in with the remains of an encampment, where, several logs were yet burning, and where, had the hour been more advanced, I should certainly have taken up my lodging for the night. The party must have been a large one, for the ground was well trodden down; but I felt certain it could not be mine, as the embers indicated that the halt had taken place the evening before; still, I rejoiced at the discovery, as it led me to hope I was not far out of the track. I determined therefore to proceed, but, before doing so, retraced my steps for about half a mile, when I heard a man shouting; and, looking 306 in the direction of the sound across the plain, I recognised Halliday and several Californians bringing up the mules.

The mystery was soon solved. On crossing the river, the Indians and waggons had been sent on, the thick wheels of the latter making no impression upon the hard surface of the road, which sufficiently accounted for my not finding their track: the remainder of the party had turned away in another direction, for the purpose of obtaining fish at a *ranch rie* about two miles distant, where a regular salmon fishery has been established by the Indians. Opposite the place where the huts are stationed, the natives have formed an artificial bar, which, by obstructing the progress of the fish, enables the fishermen to catch them in great abundance, and with much facility.

I learned that the Indians manifested the greatest desire to procure flour and bread in exchange for their fish, which they do not hold in much estimation, as it forms the staple of their food. They were also anxious 307 to trade for clothing, being but very poorly supplied with apparel. Their huts are constructed principally of the branches of trees, most ingeniously intertwined; and, for a people unacquainted with the arts of civilization, some of their domestic articles exhibit wonderful evidences of native skill and workmanship, both as regards the fashioning and the ornamenting. Two bowls which Halliday brought away were exquisitely wrought, and excited much admiration. These Indians possess no knowledge of any language save their own, though we found a few

who were sufficiently acquainted with Spanish to transact business to the limited extent of their requirements.

Our road from this halting-place became every day more rugged and dreary. The further we advanced, the scarcer was the herbage, the oats and grass having been burned up by the Indians; so that the face of the entire country appeared black and gloomy in the extreme. Water, too, was to be found only at rare intervals, nor did convenient spots <sup>308</sup> for an encampment abound, and we were often compelled to lie out under the cover of a small bush. Every now and then we came up with trees, around whose huge trunks heaps of acorns lay strewed, which the Indians of our party roasted in the ashes and ate. I did not find the flavour of them at all disagreeable, and made up my mind not to die of starvation as long as I could find any.

One night we suddenly fell in with a large party of Americans and Spaniards, encamped for the night, and who were on their way from the mines. Amongst them was Doctor Ord, brother to Lieutenant Ord, of the regular army. He had rendered himself notorious at the “diggins,” by his exorbitant charges for medicine and medical advice, by which he had succeeded in realizing an immense sum of money. The circumstance was freely spoken of, but the doctor's gold rendered him opinion-proof.

In the course of the evening, one of the Americans of the party came to where Halliday and I had built up our fire, and, bidding us a good evening, seated himself on a log of wood <sup>309</sup> opposite to us. He was a weather-beaten man, with hard features, harder hands, and of a most serious cast of countenance. His dress denoted exposure to severe service and rude conflict with the elements, as well as with the bushes and brambles of the route. His coat was made of leather, but torn, and hanging in shreds, whilst his feet were encased in an enormous pair of boots, which seemed to have been made expressly for wading through swamps, for which they were far better adapted than for the high and dry and difficult lands of this region.

“I presume,” said I, after we had exchanged sundry civilities, “that you have made your fortune at the mines, and are returning home to enjoy it.”

“Well, now, I guess I can enlighten you a little about them diggins, if you aire going there, young man, as I reckon you aire,” replied the stranger; “but I suppose you won't mind doing me a small favour first.”

“Not at all,” I answered; “anything we have you are welcome to. What is it?”

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“Why, it's just this here. I want to buy a shillin's worth of tobacco; and if you'll sell it me, or swop for it, I'll be eternally obliged to you.”

“I thought it was something more important and valuable,” said I—but here he interrupted me.

“Important and valuable! Darn it all! I should like to know what's more important and valuable than a good chaw on a road like this here, when you can't get 'baccy no how. If you haven't got it, or have, and won't part with it, say so, and I'll go about my business.”

“I am sorry,” answered I, gravely, for his earnestness amounted almost to warmth, “that I cannot oblige you. Had I any, you should be welcome to it without payment, but I do not possess a shred.”

The Yankee arose from his log, and turned away in silence, with an expression of disappointment on his countenance that I shall not readily forget. It was manifest that he was suffering extremely for the want of the herb, and if I had only preserved my stock of cigars, 311 I might—as I subsequently ascertained—have realized a handsome sum for the lot, as tobacco fetched enormous prices.

About half an hour after, another of the party came over to us. We only required to hear the faint tones of his voice, to conclude that he had been at the point of death. He readily entered into conversation, and informed us that he had passed the summer at the mines, where the excessive heat during the day, and the dampness of the ground where the gold-washing is performed, together with privation and fatigue, had brought on fever and ague, which nearly proved fatal to him. He had frequently given an ounce of gold for the visit of a medical man, and on several occasions paid

two and even three ounces for a single dose of medicine. He showed us a pair of thin peg-shoes, nearly worn out, for which he had paid twenty-four dollar. In fact, he said, the speculators derived more advantage from trading than the miners did from digging, as the produce of a day's toil would often be sacrificed for some simple necessary. 312 However, he had made a large sum of money, and, under the care of some of his party, gradually became convalescent. He told us that a great many robberies had been committed at the mines, and in their neighbourhood; but that, generally speaking, the miners respected one another's rights, and afforded new comers every assistance in their power. He inquired of us if the road to Pueblo was safe, and appeared highly gratified to learn that no danger existed from robbers, who would not venture to attack a large party.

Our journey next day was extremely difficult, owing to the irregularities and obstructions of the road. The country, too, became gloomy to the last degree, and did not tend to elevate my spirits or those of Halliday. The hills around us were of rock, slate, gravel, and sand, without a particle of vegetation, and the intervening valleys yawned like so many immense graves, into which we were voluntarily about to plunge. The cattle toiled desperately, and but for the Indians, who laboured unweariedly also, they would never have got 313 over the ground. At length, however, after some few days' journeying through this inhospitable region, during which time Halliday and I lived upon acorns, in order to husband our scanty stock of provisions, we emerged upon a sandy steep, that led directly into the Stanislaus mine, our present destination.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

Geographical features of the country—Alta-California—The Great Basin—The Timponogos, Yutah, and Pyramid Lakes—The Emigrant Pass—The California Colorado and Coast Ranges—The San Joachin Valley and River—Geological structure of the different ranges—Original sources of the precious metals—Composition of Californian gold.

Before I conduct my readers to the mines, it becomes necessary for me to lay before them a brief account of the general appearance of the country, as far as relates to its physical, geographical,

and geological features. In doing so, I shall endeavour to avoid entering more deeply into the technicalities of the subject than is consistent with the character of my narrative; for it would be somewhat out of place to introduce here abstruse geological disquisitions as to the origin and formation of the different rocks, many of them involving questions still "*sub judice*."

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The range of territory comprehended under the general name of California, situated in the western part of North America, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and forming till lately the north-western portion of the United States of Mexico, consists of two parts—the narrow peninsula of Old California, divided from the main land by the Gulf of California, and extending from Cape St. Lucas to about 32° N. latitude; and New, or Upper California, ceded to the United States by a recent treaty, comprising the whole country from 32° to 42 1/2° N. latitude, where it borders on the Oregon territory. Upper California contains about 400,000 square miles, divided into three distinct regions; first, that part lying east of the Colorado river, comprising about three-tenths of the whole; secondly, the portion occupying the centre, lying between the Colorado and the Californian range of mountains, nearly triangular in form, comprising four tenths, or about 160,000 square miles. The remaining three tenths is that portion to which the attention of the whole world has been directed by the 316 discovery of immense quantities of the precious metals within its limits; its area is about 120,000 square miles. The part which lies to the east of the Colorado is separated by the Anahuhu range from New Mexico; being bounded on the west by the Colorado; on the north by the Bear mountains, which divide it from Oregon; and on the south by the Gila. The only account as yet received of the centre of this portion is that derived from a few travellers and the trappers of Santa Fé, who describe it as being covered with broken mountain ranges, with small and confined valleys, boasting of but little arable land.

If we are to form our conclusions from the different statements that have reached us from these sources, it would seem that this section is wholly unfit for the purposes of occupation or settlement, being composed of elevated and barren table-lands, destitute of water, and presenting, by way of vegetation, only the wild sage and squash. The few ponds of water that are to be met with are in general salt; and even the waters of the Colorado are said 317 to be of a brackish or slimy

taste. A few feeble streams flow in different directions from the great mountains which, in many places, traverse this region. These streams are separated sometimes by plains, and sometimes by mountains, without water and without vegetation, and may be called deserts, as they contribute nothing towards the maintenance of animal life.

In regard to the central portion, its general features are those of a semi-desert; its northern portion forming a “Great Basin,” the extent of which is now ascertained to be 400 miles from east to west, by 250 miles from north to south; it is bounded on the south by a range of mountains, between the parallels of 37° and 38° N., extending from the Californian to the Wahsatch range. From this range streams flow north and south; the former lose themselves in the dreary waste, the latter unite with the waters of the Colorado. The country lying to the south of it is imperfectly known; but it is believed to resemble the southern part of the first section.

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The northern part, or “Great Basin,” is elevated some four or five thousand feet above the level of the sea, having a succession of isolated mountain ranges, some of which rise to the height of six or seven thousand feet above the plains, their general outline being sharp and rugged. The mountains run north and south; the streams which flow within the basin run east and west, emptying into the lakes, or losing themselves in sandy plains. The small rivulets that have their sources in the mountains, which are capped with snow, afford water and some grass, for the most part of the year, but their running waters rarely extend beyond the alluvial deposits at the bases.

The plains of the Great Basin are represented as appalling and unearthly in their appearance, not only to the traveller, but to all the brute creation, who rarely venture upon them. Mr. Bryant, who crossed the Great Salt Plain, describes it as having “a snow-like surface, and it is so compact and hard on its eastern border as to show but little impression 319 from the feet of animals passing over it. This snow-white substance is an encrustation of saline and alkaline bodies, combined in thickness from one fourth to half an inch, beneath which is a stratum of damp, whitish sand and clay, intermingled; small fragments of white, shelly rock are strewn over the entire plain, and imbedded in the salt and sand. To the west, the soil of the plain becomes softer—a composition of



clay, sand, and salt, in which the mules are represented as sinking to their knees; and at times the travelling becomes so difficult and fatiguing to the animals as almost to prevent their advancing. It is about 40 miles in breadth, and 150 miles in length.”

Within the area of this basin lie the Timponogos, or Great Salt and the Yutah Lakes, which stretch off to the east, and on the west are situated the Pyramid, Walker, and Carson Lakes, with a number of smaller ones.

The Great Salt Lake is said to be about 70 miles in length, and 40 to 60 miles in width. Its surface is dotted with numerous islands, and there are several large bays on its 320 shores. The water is brackish and offensive to the taste, and the constituent parts of the salt obtained by evaporation are, according to Colonel Fremont, as follows:—Chloride of sodium, 97.80; chloride of calcium, 0.61; chloride of magnesium, 0.24; sulphate of soda, 0.23; sulphate of lime, 1.12.

The soil along its shores is in places argillaceous, in others sandy and gravelly; where there is soil, grass, canes, rushes, and a variety of small shrubs and flowering plants grow luxuriantly. On the mountain sides there are a few scrub oaks and stunted cedars, and these are also found on the borders of the small streams which flow from the mountains. The water of these streams is very pure and cold. The Bear River and several other considerable streams empty into the Great Salt Lake from the north and east.

Along the eastern bank of the Yutah Lake, and on both sides of the Yutah River, there is much land fit for tillage and pasture. On a part of this, a settlement was made by the Mormons in 1847. Mary's River pursues a 321 serpentine course towards the south-west for about 300 miles, and is then lost in a lake, or slough. It is about 30 or 40 feet in width, with steep, perpendicular banks, at times deep, at others nearly dry, from having been absorbed by the earth, and is frequently seen only as a line of stagnant pools. The water of the river, towards its termination, is not drinkable, but as acrid and bitter as the strongest ley. The sink of Mary's River consists of pools of stagnant water covered with a yellowish slime, and emitting a disagreeable odour, which at times have the appearance of a

lake some twenty miles in length by six in breadth, according to the season of the year. The usual alluvial deposit is to be found around this sheet of water, and is covered with short grass or reeds.

Fifty miles westward of the "Sink," and at the base of the Californian range, lies the Pyramid Lake; and here the eye is again refreshed with the sight of trees. As the mountains are approached, the volcanic appearances increase, the plains are covered with scorix, 322 and the mountain ridges are composed of black, basaltic rocks. Numerous warm springs, impregnated with salt, sulphur, and magnesia, are every where to be met with in the latter. The Truckee, or Salmon-trout river, which falls into this lake, and offers a good pass through the mountains at this place, is said to be one hundred miles in length; taking its rise in the mountains, and flowing through a finely timbered country, which changes into the barren and rocky region above described, as it approaches the lake. It is seldom more than fifty feet wide, and about two feet deep; the current is rapid, and the water clear; grass in abundance can be obtained along its banks, at the season when the mountain passes are practicable.

The ascent of the Californian mountains begins at the Pyramid Lake: reddish and brown sandstone are first met with, then conglomerates, granites, and basalts. The distance to the summit is sixty-five miles, and the higher ridges are covered with a thick growth of timber, principally coniferæ. Colonel 323 Fremont estimates the pass to be about 7,200 feet above the level of the sea.

The descent, on the west, is down the Bear Creek, a small tributary of the Feather River; and the Valley of the Sacramento is reached without difficulty, forty miles north of New Helvetia. The pass is the one generally travelled by emigrants, and should never be attempted after the middle of October. The sufferings endured by emigrants to California, in 1846, ought to prove a salutary caution to those desirous of taking this route late in the season. The time requisite to cross the Great Basin and go through the Emigrant Pass, with waggons, is forty-five days, of which thirty-five are required to reach the foot of the mountains, or Pyramid Lake.

The Californian range of mountains extends from the 42nd to the 35th degree of North latitude, running nearly parallel to the coast, at the distance of 130 to 150 miles from it, where they join the

coast range, and, under the name of the Cordilleras of California, extend to Cape San Lucas, the extreme point of 324 the peninsula: these latter mountains, with their spurs, occupying the narrow belt of seacoast west of the Colorado River.

The Colorado range rises gradually from the valley, at first in gentle, undulating hills, becoming more precipitous as they ascend, but still not so much so as to prevent access to the highest points beneath the snow line. The distance from the valley to the summit is from sixty-five to seventy miles, and the average altitude 8000 feet. The ascent gives rise to a variety of climates, each producing its flowers and vegetation.

The coast range is a collection of rugged mountains, resembling spurs, their direction being generally parallel to the coast. In their whole extent, from latitude 42° N. to the Bay of San Francisco, they offer few places of settlement. They rise to the height of 4000 feet, and, towards their northern termination, where they join the Shasti mountains, reach the snow line. On the eastern side, this range declines into rolling hills; while on the coast, or western side, they 325 present a perpendicular or rocky-bound shore, thus reversing the order of the Californian range.

In both these mountain ranges there are small lakes, lying embosomed in valleys of considerable extent, which afford a plentiful supply of water, and some of the most fertile lands in California are to be found bordering them: the hills throughout the whole range are well timbered, and when trees do not exist, grass and oats grow in great profusion. The climate in these valleys is moist, and well adapted for cultivation, particularly those parts sheltered from the chilling north-west winds of summer.

Speaking of the intervening space between the Sierra Nevada and the coast range, Colonel Fremont, in his late memoir, addressed to the Congress of the United States, says—

“North and south, this region embraces about 10° of latitude—from the peninsula of California to the Oregon. From east to west it extends from the Sierra Nevada to the sea; averaging, in the middle parts, 150 miles; in 326 the northern parts, 200; giving an area of above 100,000 square miles. Looking westward, from the summit of the Sierra, the main feature presented is the long,

low, broad valley of the Joachin and Sacramento rivers; the two valleys forming, in fact, one which is 500 miles long and 50 broad, lying along the base of the Sierra, and bounded to the west by the low coast range of mountains which separates it from the sea. Long, dark lines of timber indicate the streams, and bright spots mark the intervening plains. Lateral ranges, parallel to the Sierra Nevada and the coast, complete the structure of the country, and break it into a surface of valleys and mountains—the valleys a few hundred, and the mountains two to four thousand feet above the sea. These form greater masses, and become more elevated in the north, where some peaks, as the Shasti, enter the regions of perpetual snow. Stretched along the mild coast of the Pacific, with a general elevation in its plains and valleys of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea, and backed by the 327 long and lofty wall of the Sierra, mildness and geniality may be assumed as the characteristics of its climate. The inhabitant of corresponding latitudes, on the Atlantic side of the continent, can with difficulty imagine the soft air and southern productions under the same latitudes, in the maritime region of Upper California. The singular beauty and purity of the sky, in the south of this region, is characterized by Humboldt as a rare phenomenon, and all travellers realize the truth of this description.

“These two valleys of the Sacramento and San Joachin are discriminated only by the names of the rivers which traverse them. The Valley of the San Joachin is about 300 miles long and 60 broad, between the slopes of the coast mountain and the Sierra Nevada, with a general elevation of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea. It presents a variety of soil, from dry and unproductive to well watered and luxuriantly fertile. The eastern (which is the fertile side of the valley) is intersected with numerous streams, forming large 328 and very beautiful bottoms of fertile land, wooded principally with white oaks, in open groves of handsome trees, often five or six feet in diameter, and 60 to 80 feet high. The larger streams, which are 50 to 150 yards wide, and drain the upper parts of the mountains, pass entirely across the valley, forming the Tule Lakes and the San Jochin River, which, in the rainy season, makes a continuous stream from the head of the valley to the bay. The foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada which limit the valley make a woodland country, diversified with undulating grounds and pretty valleys, and watered with numerous small streams, which reach only a few miles beyond the hills, the springs which supply them not being

copious enough to carry them across the plains. These afford many advantageous spots for farms, making sometimes large bottoms of rich, moist land. The rolling surface of the hills presents sunny exposures, sheltered from the winds; and, having a highly favourable climate and suitable soil, are considered to be well adapted to the cultivation of the grape, 329 and will probably become the principal vine-growing region of California. The uplands bordering the valleys of the large streams are usually wooded with evergreen oaks, and the intervening plains are timbered with groves or belts of evergreen and white oaks, among prairie and open land. The surface of the valley consists of level plains along the Tule Lakes and San Joachin River, changing into undulating and rolling ground nearer the foothills of the mountains.

“The northern half of the valley of Upper California is watered by the Sacramento, which runs down south into the Bay of San Francisco, while the San Joachin comes into it from the Southern extremity, flowing northwards, and meeting the Sacramento in the bay, which is nearly in the middle of the valley.”

It is in this northern part of the valley that the gold has hitherto been found.

“The Valley of the Sacramento is divided into an upper and lower part, the lower being 200 miles long, the upper about 100. The latter is not merely entitled to the distinction 330 of upper, as being higher up on the river, but also as having a superior elevation of some thousands of feet above it. The division is strongly and geographically marked. The Shasti peak stands at the head of the lower valley, in the forks of the river, rising from a base of about 1000 feet, out of a forest of heavy timber. It ascends, like an immense column, upwards of 14,000 feet, (nearly the height of Mont Blanc) the summit glistening with snow, and visible, from favourable points of view, at a distance of 140 miles down the valley. The river here, in descending from the upper valley, plunges down through a *canon*, falling 2000 feet in 20 miles. The upper valley tends to the north-east. It is 100 miles long, and heavily timbered; and the climate and productions are modified by its altitude, its more northern position, and the proximity and elevation of the neighbouring mountains, covered with snow. It contains valleys of arable land, and is deemed capable of settlement.

“Upper California partakes more of the 331 characteristics of a cold than a warm climate. The rainy season is from November to February. The rain is abundant in the northern districts, but decreases in quantity farther south; and at San Diego, the southernmost of the missions, probably no rain at all falls, as in the north of Lower California. The winter is much milder than in the same latitude on the east coast of America, for it does not appear that the Tule Lakes are ever covered with ice, nor is frost frequent in the valleys, though the surrounding heights are covered with snow for a few months. The summer is very dry, no rain falling then, except at Monterey, where there are sometimes, but rarely, slight showers. The heat is great, and the thermometer probably rises to 80° and more; but exact observations are wanting. On the banks of the Rio Colorado, at the extremity of the sandy desert, Dr. Coulter observed the thermometer rise to 140° in the open air.”

Having thus given from the most authentic sources a brief account of the most striking 332 geographical features of Upper California, I shall now quote from the same authorities a *resumé* of the different opinions published respecting the geological character of the Californian and other mountain ranges, especially such as contain, or are supposed to contain, the precious metals.

It is a matter of importance to know, that wherever gold is found in superficial alluvial strata, as it is in California, it belonged originally to those mountains, whence the river, along whose banks the metal is found, has its source. Such is the case in Virginia, in Georgia, and Carolina; and in some places the course of the river has been traced back, till the vein itself has been reached, and, as the perforations were made, the gold was found in the veins below. Over the plains where such run, the soil of its banks or shores will be enriched with particles of gold or sand, brought down by the running water. In the decomposition of the rocks forming the lofty peaks of Paraguay, in South America, masses of gold have been precipitated, weighing from 333 one to fifty pounds; and other mines have furnished masses weighing from twenty-eight to one hundred pounds. Generally speaking, where mountain ranges cut or cross each other, showing that there the greatest upheavings and disturbances have occurred, the precious metals are usually found in the purest and most abundant state. Now, several other substances are found in these situations, having, to the inexperienced eye, much the appearance of the metal in question, but which are utterly valueless.

These can be easily recognised by very simple tests. The sulphuret of iron, or iron pyrites, for instance, is a substance which much resembles gold in colour, but differs from it in the following ways: gold can be cut with a knife, like lead or zinc; the sulphuret of iron cannot; it resists all attempts of the kind, and will crumble instead of cutting. Secondly, if the substance be struck with steel, and fire is produced, it is pyrites—such an effect will not follow if it were gold. Again, if a small piece of the mineral be placed upon a wire, over a candle, 334 a sulphurous exhalation will be produced, if it be sulphuret of iron; but, if gold, this will not be the case.

Gold again is much heavier than any other similar substance. The specific gravity of Californian gold is 15.96, nearly sixteen times heavier than water.

A drop of nitric acid placed upon gold will have no effect upon it; while, if the same agent be applied to baser metals, it will have the effect of changing their colour, and blackening their surface. It appears that the gold was first detected on the American Fork, about forty miles above Sutter's Fort, (now called New Helvetia) and 1,500 or 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. The distance of the lower washing is twenty-five miles. The hills in which the diggings are made are composed of a clayey and slaty formation, overgrown with very large trees, mostly the *Pinus Lambertiani*. From the convenience of sawing the trees, the mill was erected that led to the discovery of the precious metal. These hills form the first rise of the California 335 Range, and extend about twelve miles east. Other positions where gold has been found lead to the belief that the same formation continues about the same height, to the Feather river on the north, a distance of 150 miles, and covering an area of about 1,800 square miles, throughout which gold has been already discovered; and thence, if geological facts are to be taken as a basis, extends further north.

The gold is found in its virgin state, disseminated in small particles, of different sizes and different forms. Sometimes the small pieces are without any particular shape, sometimes they resemble small leaves, sometimes twigs; and sometimes the metal is found in masses. It is found in three distinct deposits: 1, in sand and gravel-beds; 2, among decomposed granite; 3, intermixed with talcose slate. These rocks, in their original state, are hard, massive, and solid, but have now become soft and friable. This change has occurred from the long continued action of the weather and the atmosphere

upon 336 them. Some of the different ingredients that enter into the composition of the granite, or diorite rocks, are more easily decomposed than the others; this causes a vacant space or chink to be formed in the rock, which then receives the rain or melted snow. When the temperature lowers so much as to freeze the water lodged in these cavities, from the ice occupying more space than the water did, it acts as so many wedges of great power, which split off masses of the rock, that fall down into the river below. These masses, often containing gold in greater or lesser quantity, are carried down with the stream, undergoing friction in their passage, and at last becoming ground into gravel or sand, according to the rapidity of the stream, the distance they have been carried, and the impediments they have met with in their transit. The largest pieces are found near and in the talcose slate rocks, but the finer particles and scales have been carried down by the streams to the lowest part of the valleys, where they are mixed with sand on 337 the surface, and to the depth of from four or five feet.

The composition of Californian gold, according to the best analysis, is—

Gold 88.75

Silver 8.88

Copper 85

Siliceous residue 1.40

Loss 12

100

“From the character of the deposit in which the gold is at present discovered, and the fact that the streams are quite clear, and do not carry alluvial with them,” says a clever writer, “we may conclude that they are of ancient date, and that the disintegrating process is not going on rapidly. The specimens of gold obtained up to the present time confirm this theory, for they all exhibit a fused appearance; some have pebbles of quartz embedded in them, and some are amalgamated.



These latter are about the size of duck-shot, proving incontestably the 338 presence of liquid mercury in the deposit, occasioned, no doubt, by the reduction of its ore by heat; which fact alone would point back to a period when this range was undergoing volcanic action.”

## **APPENDIX. LOWER CALIFORNIA.**

The following description of Lower California, from the pen of Mr. Farnham, conveys so completely to the mind the general impression made by its first aspect on a stranger, and gives, besides, so correct an estimate of its resources and capabilities, that I cannot resist the temptation to transfer it to my pages:—

“From the highlands near the mouth of the Rio Colorado, where it forms a junction with the Gulf of California, a wild and somewhat interesting scene opens. In the east appears a line of mountains of a dark hue, stretching down the coast of the Gulf as far as the eye can reach. These heights are generally destitute of trees; but timber grows in some of the ravines. The general aspect, however, is far from pleasing. There is such a vastness of monotonous desolation; so dry, so blistered with volcanic fires; so forbidding to the wants of thirsting and hungering men; that one gladly turns his eye upon the water, the *Mar de Cortes*, the Gulf of California. The Colorado, two and a half miles in width, rushes into this Gulf with great force, lashing as it goes the small islands lying at its mouth, and 340 for many leagues around the waters of the Gulf are discoloured by its turbulent flood. On the west sweep away the mountains of Lower California. These also are a thirsty mass of burned rocks, so dry that vegetation finds no resting-place among them. But they lift themselves nobly to the clouds, and look so venerable in their baldness, that one feels an ill-defined but absorbing interest in viewing them. Man never treads their treeless heights—he finds among them neither food nor drink: nor will they ever resound with the voices and tumults of human life. Still, is there not in a wilderness of barren mountains a vast idea of chilling unchangeableness, which inspires a feeling of awe and reverence? The poor Indians thought so. They peopled them with gods, and trembled when the moon lighted them dimly at night, and when the elements groaned among them. They stand a vast assemblage of red and brown earth, extending in a bold jagged line broader and higher, onward and upward, till they fade away among the bright clouds and dewless

skies of Lower California: that field of trial for men who would plant in the heart of the Indian the seeds of a holy life; the scenes of the labours, hopes, and sufferings, of Padres Salva Tierra and Ugarte; the burning-place of Padres Corando's and Tamaral's martyrdom! We will describe that country as it now exists.

“The province of Lower California extends from Cape San Lucas to the Bay of Todos Santos, and varies from thirty to one hundred and fifty miles in width, a superficial extent almost equal to that of Great Britain; and yet, on account of its barrenness, never will, from the products of the soil, maintain five hundred thousand people in a 341 state of comfort ordinarily found in the civilized condition. This statement may seem surprising to those who are acquainted with the geological fact that, though it is a volcanic country, the lava and other volcanic matter is decomposing at the usual rate. But surprise will cease when such persons are informed that every few years tornadoes sweep over the country with such violence, and bearing with them such floods of rain, that whatever of soil has been in any manner previously formed, is swept into the sea. So that even those little nooks among the mountains, where the inhabitants from time to time make their fields, and task the vexed earth for a scanty subsistence, are liable to be laid bare by the torrents. In case the soil chance to be lodged in some other dell, before it reach the Ocean or the Gulf, and the people follow it to its new location, they find perhaps no water there, and cannot cultivate it. Consequently, they are often driven by dreadful want to some other point in quest of sustenance, where they may not find it, and perish among the parched highlands. For the space of twenty or thirty leagues from the Cape San Lucas, the air is rendered mild and kindly by the sea-breezes, and the ground in many parts being wet by little currents of water running from the highlands, is very fruitful. From this section to Loretto, latitude 26° 16' N., the heat is excessive, the soil dry and barren, and the surface of the country extremely craggy and forbidding. From Loretto northward to Todos Santos, the air is more temperate, the water in the mountains sometimes freezes, and the soil is not so rugged and full of rocks, but is barren and desolate as that around Loretto. The mean range of temperature in the whole country, in the summer 342 season, is from 60° to 74° Fahrenheit. The rains fall in the winter months, are very severe, and of short duration. During the remainder of the year the air is dry and clear, and the sky more beautiful than the imagination can conceive.

“The range of mountains occupying the whole interior of this country vary in height from one to five thousand feet above the level of the sea. They are almost bare of all verdure, mere brown piles of barrenness, sprinkled, here and there, with a cluster of briars, small shrubs, or dwarf trees. Among the ridges are a few spots to which the sweeping rains have spared a little soil. These, if watered by springs or streams, are beautiful and productive. There are also a few places near the coast which are well adapted to tillage and pasturage.

“But the principal difficulty with this region is one common to all countries of volcanic origin—a scarcity of water. The porousness of the rocks allows it to pass under ground to the sea. Consequently, one finds few streams and springs in Lower California. From the Cape San Lucas to the mouth of the Colorado, six hundred miles, there are only two streams emptying into the Gulf. One of these is called San Josef del Cabo: it passes through the plantations of the Mission bearing the same name, and discharges itself into the bay of San Barnabas. The other is the Mulege, which waters the Mission of Santa Rosalia, and enters the Gulf in latitude 27° N. These are not navigable. The streams on the ocean coast, also, are few and small. Some of them are large enough to propel light machinery, or irrigate considerable tracts of land, but none of them are navigable. In the interior are several large springs, which send out abundant currents along the rocky beds of their upper courses; but, when they reach the loose sands and porous rocks of the lower country, they sink, and enter the sea through subterranean channels. A great misfortune it is, too, that the lands which border those portions of these streams which run above the ground consist of barren rocks. Where springs, however, and arable land occur together, immense fertility is the consequence. There is some variety of climate on the coasts which it may be well to mention. On the Pacific shore, the temperature is rendered delightfully balmy by the sea-breezes, and the humidity which they bring along with them. Fahrenheit's thermometer ranges on this coast, during the summer, between fifty-eight and seventy-one degrees. In the winter months, while the rains are falling, it sinks as low as fifty degrees above zero. On the Gulf coast, there is a still greater variation. While at the Cape the mercury stands between sixty and seventy degrees, near the head of the Gulf it is down to the freezing point.

“These isolated facts, in regard to the great territory under consideration, will give the reader as perfect an idea of the surface and agricultural capabilities of Lower California as will be here needed.

“The few fertile spots in Lower California were occupied at an early day, and planted with maize, wheat, beans, peas, and all manner of esculent roots.

“The European vine was also introduced extensively, and yielded grapes of the finest quality. From these grapes wines were made, which were equal in excellence to those of the Canary Islands. The orange, lemon, lime, citron, prune, plantain, 344 pine-apple, and other tropical fruits, were also planted, and yielded abundant crops. These articles are still cultivated by the present inhabitants. They also rear, as of old, horses, black cattle, mules, goats, and a few hogs. But the gross amount of all these products, in a country where there is so little fruitful land, is very small; and, in fact, the people, though not numerous, are unable, on those barren shores, to supply themselves at all times with the necessaries of life.

“But there is, in the construction of the Universe, a great compensatory law, which, when one blessing is withheld, grants another in its stead. So here, while the land is desolate, the sea is stored with an incredible abundance and variety of fish. Only a few of them can be named: the halibut, salmon, turbot, skate, pilchard, large oyster, thornback, mackerel, barbel, bonitos, soles, lobsters, crabs, sardines, cod, tunnies, anchovies, and pearl-oysters. These fish are all of the finest quality, and exceedingly numerous. In a word, the waters of Lower California are so rich, that, although the land be dreary, and, for the most part, a leafless waste, the country would be a valuable acquisition to any commercial nation. The value of the pearl-oyster alone would authorise us to make this remark. There are immense beds of these in the Gulf. These pearls of Lower California are considered of excellent water; but their rather irregular figure somewhat reduces their value. The manner of obtaining these pearls is not without interest. The vessels employed in the fisheries are from fifteen to thirty tons burden. They are usually fitted out by private individuals. The Armador, or owner, commands them. Crews are shipped to work them, 345 and from forty to fifty Indians, called Busos, to dive for the oyster. A stock of provisions and spirits, a small sum of

money to advance the people during the cruise, a limited supply of calaboose furniture, a sufficient number of hammocks to sleep in, and a quantity of ballast, constitute nearly all the cargo outward bound. Thus arranged, they sail into the Gulf; and having arrived at the oyster banks, cast anchor and commence business. The divers are first called to duty. They plunge to the bottom in four or five fathom water, dig up with sharpened sticks as many oysters as they are able, rise to the surface, and deposit them in sacks hung to receive them at the vessel's side. And thus they continue to do until the sacks are filled, or the hours allotted to this part of the labour are ended. When the diving of the day is done, all come on board and place themselves in a circle around the Armador, who divides what they have obtained, in the following manner: two oysters for himself, the same number for the Busos, or divers, and one for the government.

“This division having been concluded, they next proceed, without moving from their places, to open the oysters which have fallen to the lot of the Armador. During this operation, the dignitary has to watch the Busos with the greatest scrutiny, to prevent them from swallowing the pearls with the oysters; a trick which they perform with so much dexterity, as almost to defy detection, and by means of which they often manage to secrete the most valuable pearls. The government portion is next opened with the same precautions, and taken into possession by the Armador. And last of all, the Busos open theirs, and sell them to the Armador, 346 in liquidation of debts incurred for their outfits, or of moneys advanced during the voyage. They usually reserve a few to sell to dealers on shore, who always accompany these expeditions with spirituous liquors, chocolate, sugar, cigars, and other articles of which these Indian divers are especially fond. Since the Mexicans obtained their independence, another mode of division has been adopted. Every time the Busos come up, the largest oyster which he has obtained is taken by the Armador and laid aside for the use of the Virgin Mary. The rest are thrown in a pile; and when the day's diving is ended, eight oysters are laid out for the Armadors, eight for the Busos, and two for the government.

“In the year 1831, one vessel with seventy Busos, another with fifty, and two with thirty each, and two boats with ten each, from the coast of Senora, engaged in this fishery. The one brought in forty ounces of pearls, valued at \$6,500; another twenty-one ounces, valued at \$3,000; another twelve ounces, valued at \$2,000; and the two boats a proportionate quantity. There were in the same season

ten or twelve other vessels, from other parts, employed in the trade; which, if equally successful, swelled the value of pearls taken in that year to the sum of more than \$40,000.

“This pearl-fishery, indeed, is the principal source of wealth in Lower California. From the soil little can ever be derived; unless the deserts and mountains, like other volcanic districts on the west coast of the continent, should prove to be stored with the precious metals. There is a high probability that this may be found the case; for a mine called San Antonio, near La Paz, which 347 has been wrought somewhat, is said to be rich. In addition to the products of this mine and the pearls, there is a limited export of dates, wines, grapes, soap, figs, mazcal, spirits, salt from a lake on the island Del Carmine, and a few goat and beeves' hides.”

END OF VOL I.

F. Shoberl, Jun., Printer to H.R.H. Prince Albert, Rupert Street.